LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF MUNICH

Delivered at the International Conference on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Munich, Prague 1958

ORBIS — PRAGUE

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FOREWORD

The following is made up of excerpts from lectures and statements delivered at an international conference of historians, convened on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Munich *Diktat* by the Czechoslovak Historical Society, the Charles University, the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and the Institute of International Politics and Economics. The conference was attended by representatives from the following twelve countries: Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, France, the German Democratic Republic, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Rumania and the U.S.S.R.

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EXCERPTS FROM THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PROFESSOR VÁCLAV HUSA, CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

"On the occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of Munich, the Czechoslovak Historical Society, together with Charles University, the Historical Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of International Politics and Economics, decided to call an international conference to study the causes and effects of the fateful Munich events of 1938.

"The immense complexity of the historical facts generally grouped under the name of Munich represents, in our opinion, one of the basic problems of the present political history not only of Czechoslovakia but of the world. We believe, therefore, that the analysis of all the historic connections and causes which finally led to Munich, as well as of its consequences, is an urgent task for international historiography, and specifically for its more specialized field, the study of the history of international relations."

"It seems to us that after a lapse of twenty years the time has come for historiographers of various countries to meet and, in an atmosphere of free scientific discussion, to exchange views on the question of Munich. We are happy that among the twenty-five guests from eleven countries who accepted our invitation we have the honour to greet not only eminent representatives of contemporary historiography and well known experts on international affairs, but that among them are old

friends of Czechoslovakia, who at the time of the Munich events were fully aware of the disastrous consequences of the policy of the imperialist powers, and actively defended the cause of our Republic and the maintenance of world peace.

"When stressing that one of the main purposes of this conference is to contribute to a more profound, scientific understanding of the historic events which climaxed in the Munich surrender in the face of Hitler's fascism, this does not mean that we are thinking only of the past. In our view, no one who is concerned with the fate of mankind can discuss the Munich events without thinking at the same time about the present and the future. Munich, and everything that preceded and followed it, is for us a part of the present, which cannot be discussed with calm indifference, or without remembering the tragic consequences that resulted from the surrender to fascist aggression.

"The extent of the Munich betrayal can only be judged in the light of the development of mankind during the past two decades. It is, therefore, not possible for this conference to pass indifferently and in silence over the fact that the spirit of Munich is not merely historical fact but that it still lives, and that as it did twenty years ago it is again preparing the way for those dark forces of history that strive to draw mankind into the abyss of another, even more disastrous catastrophe than the last war.

"We trust that a true scientific analysis of the causes and consequences of Munich will also contribute to the present world struggle for peace and understanding among nations. If our conference succeeds in this, it will have accomplished its purpose."

Prof. Jiří Hájek (Czechoslovakia)

CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION AT THE TIME OF MUNICH

(Excerpt from the main address to the conference)

"We Czechoslovak students of the history of Munich cannot approach the material contained in publications and archives as outsiders. We lived through that event as individuals and shared in all the trials and experiences of our nations. We fought against the tendencies that led to Munich, trying to prevent the Czechoslovak Government from succumbing to them. We were intensely aware of the moments when the overwhelming majority of the Czechoslovak people consciously resisted those tendencies. We witnessed their resolve and determination and their bitter disappointment. We also experienced events that proved that the men of Munich and their advocates had been in the wrong: Munich did not save Czechoslovakia from complete subjugation. That had been the reason given to their peoples by the British and French politicians and as a result of their pressure, also by the Czechoslovak Government of the time—we witnessed the occupation in 1939. Munich did not save the peace, as we realized in September 1939.

"In 1945 those of us who survived the catastrophe could find ample proof that the truth had been on the side of those who had called for a broad anti-fascist alliance against Munich. In 1938 this alliance could have saved Czechoslovakia and peace; but later it was able to smash German fascism and liberate the nations subjugated by Hitler's expansion and by his Munichite supporters only following years of bloodshed and sacri-

fice. It is from this point of view that we evaluate the events of 1938. As the same time we are studying them thoroughly, seeking out every individual detail which helps us to reveal the whole truth. We believe that only by using this approach and our knowledge of reality, derived from our personal and national experiences, can we contribute to the explanation and clarification of some problems connected with Munich and to the full grasp of the significance of that event both for history and contemporary life."

"The fate of Czechoslovakia between the two World Wars clearly shows the impact of a specific historical epoch—the general crisis of capitalism, during which developed the dramatic clash between the forces of socialist revolution and the forces of the old order."

"For Czechoslovakia the main danger from the very beginning was German imperialism. Under the pretext of defence against the latter, the middle class leadership of the Republic linked its foreign policy as closely as possible to that of the Western Powers, France in particular. This, morever, helped them to strengthen and safeguard their power against the strong revolutionary labour movement at home.

"The policy of French hegemony, however, completely collapsed during the Ruhr crisis in 1923. From that time on the reliability of the Western alliance for Czechoslovakia as a support and aid against German imperialism became increasingly doubtful. At the Locarno talks in 1925 the Western Powers managed to get from Germany a guarantee only for the frontiers of the Western neighbours, not, it should be noted, for Poland and Czechoslovakia."

At the beginning of the thirties the development of international relations revealed that the Western Powers were willing to abandon some of the advantages of the

Treaty of Versailles and to relax some of its limitations which had been holding back and slowing down the expansion of the fascist powers, in order to bring Germany and Italy into the common anti-Soviet front. This was a grave warning to Czechoslovakia. At that time, however, a new and positive perspective for Czechoslovakia arose from the policy of the Soviet Union.

"Czechoslovakia—even as a bourgeois state—could no longer maintain its independence and freedom in the face of German expansion as the unconditional ally of France and Great Britain. This could have been done only by a new policy, actively based on collective security and on an effective system of guarantees of peace, limiting and reducing the activity of the fascist aggressors. Thus objectively the interests of the Czechoslovak Republic became parallel, even identical, with the interests of the anti-fascist forces in Europe and in the world and with a policy which could be carried out only by co-operation between the Soviet Union and the states threatened by Hitler's expansion. In domestic policy this involved an alliance of all forces of the working class with the left-wing of the bourgeoisie. A timely recognition of this dependence and the corresponding political measures might have saved Czechoslovakia from the tendencies of Western policies that later led to Munich. The Government and the ruling class of Czechoslovakia, however, refused to face up to these facts."

"In 1936—37 when Hitlerite fascism, as the result of the benevolent attitude of the Western Powers, had gained sufficient strength to commit direct acts of aggression, certain objective conditions developed for the Czechoslovak Republic which should have made it possible to resist an attack. The democratic tradition and outlook of the majority of the Czechoslovak people of all nationalities helped to give these objective facts expression

in domestic and foreign policies. The fascist and semi-fascist groups of Czech and Slovak reaction became isolated; but the excessive dependence of Czechoslovak foreign policy on the West, to which a large part of the liberal middle classes led by Beneš, and even the leadership of the Socialist parties, had succumbed, and the continued insistence at home on the anti-communist coalition of those forces with the reactionary pro-fascist right-wing, prevented a practical application of the policies advocated by the Communists and the new progressive groups of anti-fascists and patriots."

An independent Czechoslovakia by its very existence represented a serious barrier to the expansion of German imperialism, which made every effort to have it removed. The nazi plans of the period 1935-1938 are now known and with the subsequent course of events after Munich they show that German imperialism was preparing the systematic planned destruction of Czechoslovakia.

"Even though the question of the German minority in Czechoslovakia was in the forefront throughout the events of 1938, it should be realized that in actual fact it was a subordinate question—not the reason but pretext and means to destroy Czechoslovakia according to the above-mentioned plans. Hitlerite Germany was not concerned with the minority rights of the Germans in Czechoslovakia, but with the destruction of that state as such. The German minority was used to serve the purposes of that policy. Aided by Hitler's propaganda machine, by the German capitalists and landowners, fascist demagogy and unimpeded terror and also by their policy of nationalistic excesses on the one hand and by reliance on the sympathies of the reactionary Czechoslovak right-wing on the other hand, Henlein's fascist party became the dominant factor in the minority in 1935. From 1936 onward it submitted proposals which pretended

to improve the position of the Germans in Czechoslovakia, but it did so merely in order to weaken the central power of the Czechoslovak Government and to weaken its resistance to nazi pressure."

German foreign policy, cold-bloodedly and determinedly, followed its aim of destroying Czechoslovakia, changing its tactics according to circumstances.

"In 1938 a campaign of threats and intimidation was launched, which was combined with a campaign of slander in order to turn the sympathies of the people in the European capitalist countries away from Czechoslovakia. The country was painted not only as a prison for the German minority but also as a centre of Bolshevism which was alleged to constitute a threat to the whole of Europe. Anti-Communism, the main slogan of that propaganda, found considerable response among the circles of the reactionary bourgeoisie of the Western Powers and in the states of Central and S.E. Europe. The most effective support for the German policy for the destruction of Czechoslovakia came from the Western Powers."

"The Government and ruling circles of Great Britain and France, throughout 1937 and 1938, directed their policies towards agreement with Germany and Italy along the lines of a Four-Power Pact. Lord Halifax's visit to Hitler in November 1937 confirmed this very clearly."

"The supporters of the policy of agreement with Hitler wished to strengthen the fascist states for the struggle against the U.S.S.R. and against Communism in Europe. The reactionary circles of those countries were comparatively unconcerned by the fact that this assistance in the name of anti-Bolshevism might also prove a threat to France and Great Britain themselves. On the contrary: they assumed that by directing Hitler's aggressive intentions towards the East they would relieve the pressure of German imperialism on the colonies.

"A barrier to the realization of these plans were the existing treaty commitments and the obligations arising from membership in the League of Nations. And since Czechoslovakia was the first target of the planned attack, the commitments towards her undertaken by France as a direct ally and by Great Britain as an ally of France and a leading member state of the League of Nations formed an unpleasant and burdensome obstacle. An attack by Germany on Czechoslovakia and resistance on the part of that state would have forced the two Great Powers—in view of the commitments they had undertaken—into an anti-fascist alliance at the side of the Soviet Union. The character of that alliance would undoubtedly have been objectively progressive and, hence, entirely unacceptable to British and French reaction. The strength of such an alliance was clear at first glance. It would have obviously led to the defeat of Hitler. This was assumed with certainty both by Hitler's generals and diplomats, particularly at such times when the possibility of the formation of such an alliance appeared real. That was the case in May 1938 and later again in September 1938. The leading British supporter of the Munich policy, Henderson, after discussions with representatives of the opposition among Hitler's generals, stated, at the end of August, that if the British went to war against Germany on account of Czechoslovakia they would defeat Hitler. But all these considerations were mingled with fear of the results of a victory of the anti-fascist coalition and the fall of Hitler."

"The American Ambassador in Paris, Bullitt, in his report to the White House of May 22, 1938 gave a warning about the consequences of a development in the situation leading to France being forced to go to the aid of Czechoslovakia: 'There would only be one possible result: the complete destruction of Western Europe and Bolshevism all over the continent.' Chamberlain's close

adviser on matters of foreign policy, Sir Horace Wilson, rejected, at the end of August, the very idea that Britain would speak out in defence of Czechoslovakia: 'The only one to gain from that would be Bolshevism. That has to be prevented. The right of Germany to expand in the south-eastern direction has to be recognized.' On September 26, when a clash with Hitler seemed inevitable and the participation of Britain in an alliance with France and the Soviet Union became for a short time a real possibility, Chamberlain said in the course of discussions with Gamelin (quoted by Jan Masaryk who was present): 'Who will give me a guarantee that Germany will not go bolshevik?' This perspective frightened the ruling circles in London and Paris and forced them to seek a way out of the situation of which they were so afraid."

"Those were the motives behind the attitude of the Western Powers towards Czechoslovakia in 1938. They led the governments of those powers to accept *a priori* Hitler's views and proposals on Czechoslovakia as reasonable and acceptable without further study, without consideration of their consequences, or even the real prerequisites for their fulfilment."

"Under those circumstances the negotiations with Germany and with Czechoslovakia had a special, almost grotesque character: The Western Powers let Hitler know that they were willing to yield to his wishes which, in advance, they considered reasonable. Then Henlein submitted his demands to the Czechoslovak Government. London and Paris recommended, later even ordered, that Prague accept those demands. Any proposals put forward by Czechoslovakia which Hitler rejected were also rejected by the Western Governments even when they had earlier been approved by their representatives, and in some cases had been initiated by them."

"The Western representatives then hastened to Munich without any reservations or reticence. They went to carry

out a task which was later characterized by one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Munich, Neville Henderson, in his letter to Lord Halifax of October 6, 1938: 'to save Hitler and his régime.' And Czechoslovakia was sacrificed for the aim of ensuring agreement among the capitalist powers on the basis of a Four-Power Pact. No wonder, then, that no one at Munich as much as gave a thought to Czechoslovakia's interests, and that her delegates summoned at a later stage to be handed the decision about them, made without them and against them, were given simply to understand by the representatives of France and Great Britain that in the European set-up that was to have been established by the Munich negotiations, and which Chamberlain extolled as bringing 'peace for our time', there was no place for a free Czechoslovakia."

"There seems to be a widespread view, propagated by numerous publications, to the effect that the U.S.A. had nothing to do with the Munich policy of the West European Powers. The behaviour of the Government and the ruling class of the United States, however, cannot be considered passive—on the contrary: a number of facts show that the Government of the United States of America, its diplomats and the American monopolies themselves worked very actively for Munich and even inspired its policy. First of all, there is what we might call the pre-history of Munich: The renewal of German imperialism after the first World War, carried out in an atmosphere of anti-Soviet intrigues and line-ups, was only possible thanks to the decisive participation of American capital."

"British, German and American documents, moreover, reveal that American participation in the actual preparation of Munich was very considerable. The above-mentioned letter, written by Ambassador Bullitt on May 22, in fact contains a very clear conception of Munich and even gives its motives. By the side of Bullitt stood

Kennedy, the Ambassador of the United States in London, who worked in close contact with Chamberlain, and the Berlin Ambassador, Hugh Wilson, who especially in August 1938 showed great initiative in support of the Munich policy, trying to bring direct influence to bear on President Beneš at the time of the Runciman Mission. The influence of these forces and personalities in American foreign policy was considerable. It should be realized that Roosevelt himself succumbed to them. On September 23, as the result of Bullitt's repeated proposals, the Government of the United States took the initiative in proposing a conference of 'interested states' excluding the Soviet Union and issued a peace appeal to Hitler, Chamberlain, Daladier and Beneš asking them to continue peaceful negotiations. This at the very time when a conflict would have overthrown Hitler. In all this they indiscriminately place the German aggressor on the same level as threatened Czechoslovakia. On United States instigation the Latin-American states likewise appealed to Germany and Czechoslovakia. The American President was the first to turn to Mussolini on September 26 with the request that he use his good offices between Hitler and the West. In this way the U.S. contributed to the diplomatic isolation of Czechoslovakia, increased pressure on that country and endorsed Mussolini in the role of 'mediator' in convening the Munich Conference and in the subsequent negotiations.

"This American attitude had far-reaching results not only in the diplomatic preparations and execution of Munich but also in the temporary disorientation, demoralization and dispersion of those forces of public opinion in Europe and all over the world, which could have made a stand against Hitler's aggression and the Munich policy of the British and French Governments."

"The attitude of the Soviet Union throughout the course of the Czechoslovak crisis was fundamentally different.

Even before 1938 Soviet foreign policy, aimed at the establishment of effective collective defence against aggression, became a force that offered the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, who were threatened by that aggression, a new framework of existence which was far more secure than the *cordon sanitaire* of the Western Powers. The positive potentialities of that policy assumed an even more definite character for Czechoslovakia as a result of the 1935 Treaty.

"Throughout the period of the 1938 crisis the Soviet Union did everything in its power to develop the policy of collective security in favour of Czechoslovakia, and to ensure that the terms of the Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty would come into effect. Even outside its framework they tried to create conditions that would enable their armed forces to take effective steps to aid their ally. In so doing they had to fight not only against the intrigues of Hitler Germany but also against the reluctance, sabotage and direct enmity of Great Britain and France and the passivity of the Czechoslovak Government, which out of regard for its Western allies and its own class prejudices and fears was unwilling to accept the proffered aid of the Soviet Union."

"Even though the Western governments, primarily Great Britain, rejected the Soviet initiative for the preparation of measures against the German aggressor, the Soviet Government did not abandon their efforts to create an anti-Hitler alliance which would undoubtedly have been capable not only of repulsing the fascist attack but of foiling it from the very beginning. They returned to that idea again in the May crisis, at the end of August, the beginning of September and for the last time expressed their immediate willingness to participate in common military action on September 27, when in face of Hitler's provocations it seemed that even the Western governments would have to go to the defence of Czechoslovakia."

"In its negotiations with Czechoslovakia the Soviet Government never missed a single opportunity to assure its ally that it would stand by its promises. While the Western Powers proclaimed in various versions that Czechoslovakia could not count on their aid unless she fulfilled certain conditions, which were gradually stepped up until they literally involved the suicide of the Republic, the language of the Soviet Government was absolutely clear, comprehensible and unconditional; this applied both to its public proclamations and diplomatic exchanges: The Soviet Union will carry out her obligations, and do so not only if France adheres to hers but even if Czechoslovakia asks for Soviet aid either through the League of Nations or directly. From the time of the occupation of Austria—March 15, April 24, May 21 and 22, and in September almost daily, the reports of the Czechoslovak Ambassador in Moscow repeat that idea again and again. On September 10 he reported that the Kremlin was discussing the possibilities of action even without France. These assurances were accompanied by a proposal for a conference of the Chiefs of Staff and technical experts which would guarantee the material conditions needed for the fulfilment of those pledges. Apart from these diplomatic exchanges public statements were made, for instance, the speeches by I. M. Kalinin on May 8, by M. M. Litvinov on June 23 and the authoritative message from J. V. Stalin which Klement Gottwald handed to President Beneš in May."

"Even at that time some of the Munich politicians, especially Bonnet, tried to obscure and distort the attitude of the U.S.S.R. at the time of Munich. Similarly, some of the postwar bourgeois literature tries to throw doubts on and even to deny the Soviet willingness and readiness to go to the aid of Czechoslovakia to counter Hitler's aggressive purposes. Various arguments and

verbose speculations have been concocted, which can be basically summarized under two headings:

a) The Soviet Union is alleged to have avoided any direct step to aid Czechoslovakia by stressing the necessity for France to fulfil her duties as an ally, and by trying to set in motion the complicated machinery of the League of Nations, which had already proved in the past to be ineffective.

b) The fact that in the end the Soviet Union did not intervene proved that its expressions of sympathy for Czechoslovakia and willingness to go to her aid were a mere gesture of political propaganda.

"Assertions of this kind, which, moreover, were put out in very vague terms, can be very easily refuted. It was clear that Soviet foreign policy not only in its own interests, but also in the interest of Czechoslovakia itself, tried primarily to create the broadest possible anti-Hitler coalition with the Western Powers. Such a coalition would have ensured the defence of Czechoslovakia strategically and technically and above all the political isolation of Hitler. It would also have countered the anti-Soviet attitude of a number of bourgeois governments who were unwilling to go to the aid of Czechoslovakia if supported only by the U.S.S.R., but would have followed the example of England and France, had those countries taken a stand against Hitler. Moreover, the primary emphasis on the duty of France to go to the aid of Czechoslovakia not only fully corresponded to the terms of the treaty signed in 1935, but was a vital means of inducing the Western Powers to abandon the policy of appeasing the aggressor. Finally, using the machinery of the League of Nations, even though the Soviet Government had no illusions about it, did have a certain moral significance and was a way of rousing Western public opinion. Besides, the Soviet message to the Government in Prague to the effect that once a complaint had been lodged with the League the

Soviet Government would not wait for any decisions of Geneva, shows that the U.S.S.R. did not intend to take refuge behind the League of Nations but truly intended to use every opportunity for decisive action against an attack by Hitler.

"Finally, it should be realized that the U.S.S.R. was willing to act without any legal formalities arising out of treaties, on condition that Czechoslovakia requested her help. For this reason she prepared for such a contingency by mobilizing her armed forces. The fact that in the end no action resulted was due, not to lack of goodwill on the part of the Soviet Government and people, but to the betrayal of the Western Powers who abrogated France's commitments to her allies and sabotaged any effective action in the League of Nations and also terrorized the Czechoslovak Government, preventing it both from making a complaint to the League of Nations and from turning directly to the Soviet Union for help.

"The form of this pressure is revealed in a statement made by Czechoslovak ministers, in which they give reasons for the acceptance of the Munich dictate. The Minister of Propaganda Vavrečka and the Minister of Justice Dérer confirmed the willingness of the U.S.S.R. to go to war, if necessary in alliance with Czechoslovakia alone, but stated that 'the whole of Europe including France and Great Britain, would have considered such a war a war of Bolshevism against Europe and thus the whole of Europe might have taken up arms against Russia and against us.' The leader of the Agrarian Party Beran, who at the time of Munich recognized the consequences of his dealings with Henlein, in a moment of confusion and under the crushing impact of the news of the Munich dictate, proclaimed: 'The western and other allies have not only betrayed us but have threatened us with military action. The only ally who has not turned traitor is the Soviet Union.'

"Statements of this kind can be found in the minutes of meetings of the Czechoslovak Government. Evidence of this kind is, in this case, particularly valuable and valid, as it was given by persons who were themselves responsible for the rejection of the Soviet offer."

"Up to this point we have been following the behaviour of other governments towards Czechoslovakia. We have seen that it was the Western Powers that bore the main responsibility for the whole process of weakening and finally destroying Czechoslovakia. But it ought to be realized that Czechoslovakia itself had certain, though limited opportunities to prevent or at least to escape the Munich catastrophe."

"As early as in 1935 the signing of a Treaty with the U.S.S.R. created for Czechoslovakia the possibility of a new policy, aimed at the defence of the State and of her national existence. The interests of the peoples of Czechoslovakia were identical with those of the progressive forces throughout the world. Czechoslovakia's policy could have prevented Munich by a conscious and complete identification with those forces. Very many opportunities were lost that might have strengthened Czechoslovakia's position as a state and at the same time have contributed to the growing strength of the anti-fascist front in the whole of Europe, because for three long years the Government of the Republic shut its eyes to this fact and recoiled from its consequences. Further opportunities were lost because the Czechoslovak Government continued to accept directives and instructions from the Western Powers who had come to regard Czechoslovakia as an impediment to their policies and finally, because it was unable to regain its strength by ridding itself of the influence of outspoken traitors and advocates of capitulation."

But not everything was lost even in 1938. This is shown clearly by the effect of and response to the three attempts

and gestures of resistance by the Czechoslovak Government under popular pressure. They indicated a rejection of the policy of resignation and capitulation: May 21, September 13—15 during the Henlein Putsch and September 23 when mobilization was proclaimed in Czechoslovakia.

"The Czechoslovak Government, however, committed a fatal mistake and bears the blame for not being able even at such moments to advance to further resistance, though they enjoyed the full support of their people, could rely on Soviet aid and had with them the sympathies of democratic public opinion of the entire world. The Government's attitudes were influenced by pressure from the right-wing which, from the very beginning, yielded to class prejudices in openly giving preference to capitulation rather than struggle. The right-wing, influential as it was, remained, nevertheless, a minority in the nation. The leaders of the fascist Agrarians had already been exposed and isolated during the September crisis.

"President Beneš and the politicians close to him wielded decisive influence over the government and the army. It was up to them at least at the last moment to put their confidence in the people, who relied on them and expected them to carry out a policy of consistent democratic and patriotic resistance to Hitler and against the Western dictates. Favourable conditions for such a policy existed in the strong army, fortifications, the support of the Soviet Union and the sympathies of world democratic opinion which a decisive resistance by Czechoslovakia to nazism might have rallied to action. But that required the Czechoslovak bourgeois democratic leaders to repudiate their commitments under the government coalition which had tied them ever since 1920 to the most reactionary circles of finance capitalism, to which they had succumbed completely."

"But the representatives of the liberal and democratic wing of the Czech and Slovak bourgeoisie failed. The documents and literature on Munich include a number of proofs of that failure. Especially in the final stage of negotiations Beneš made extraordinary concessions and accepted demands that affected the very foundations of the Republic."

"Their basic mistake and guilt lies in the fact that they rejected any form of co-operation with the Communist Party and the U.S.S.R. and even at that time remained completely at the beck and call of the Western Powers, whose policies they accepted as basic and whose motives they made out to be democratic, peace-loving and progressive, and that they continued in their willingness to work for the Western Power's aims—even for an agreement on the basis of a Four-Power pact."

"But that failure and some of the forms it took—such as the negotiations with Henlein, the 'fifth plan,' and blackmail 'by request'—cannot lessen the guilt of those who were primarily responsible for that pressure. When Bonnet, and after him other men of Munich tried to use Beneš's pliability as an excuse, they were simply trying to establish an alibi. Their arguments were as specious as the excuse of an impostor or robber who claimed that his victim offered no real resistance. A great deal can be blamed on the Czechoslovak Government's willingness to make concessions. They meekly obeyed the orders of the West and did not even manage to derive strength from the support of their own nation and the Soviet Union, their only ally which did not fail them.

"Nevertheless, the Czechoslovak Government should not be judged by those who used and misused its weaknesses. The right to that rests with the Czechoslovak people, who in 1938 wanted to fight for their liberty but were deceived by the Western allies and the advocates of capitulation in their own Government."

"Munich convinced the Czech and the Slovak nations that their freedom, independence and liberty could not be guaranteed by the bourgeoisie even within the framework of bourgeois democracy, which it abandoned, nor by fascist dictatorship which was forced upon them by Hitler's occupation with the aim of wiping out the nation. They understood that their country could not be a satellite of the Western imperialists, used simply for the purpose of bargaining, nor a vassal of German fascism whose only aim was enslavement and Germanization. They realized that the future of the nation could never be a return—in any form—to the old bourgeois Republic whose rulers condemned themselves to a shameful end by the Munich capitulation and betrayal. The Czechoslovak people saw that the future lay in the revolutionary struggle for true national and social liberation, the road to Socialism."

Academician I. I. Mints (U.S.S.R.)

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MUNICH PERIOD

(Excerpt from an address to the conference)

"Munich has gone down in history as a synonym of the betrayal of nations, a betrayal of national interests. The men of Munich and their contemporary exponents have good reason for devoting considerable efforts to concealing the truth from the nations, and by doing so they attempt to facilitate the continuation of the same notorious policy. There are few historical events which have been as openly and impudently distorted as the betrayal of Munich."

"The active participants in those events have tried in their various memoirs either to deny any responsibility for Munich, or at least to minimize that responsibility. Others again have tried to rehabilitate the Munich Agreement as such, or certain aspects of the policy which led to it, while yet another group has tried to shift the blame on others. In all these cases, the memoirs in question have been designed not to record historical facts but rather to distort them."

"The real history of the Munich conspiracy against the nations can be brought to life again only by fitting it into a set of historic happenings, which gave rise to the events in question, only by studying them in their entirety and mutual interaction. Munich has its roots far back in history. The alignment of forces, their clash and the entire way in which they operated, was directly determined by the insoluble contradictions of the Treaty systems of Versailles and Washington, which politically adjusted the division of the world after the First World War."

"The Dawes Plan was the first step towards establishing the economic foundations of the Munich policy. That plan bore the trade mark 'Made in USA'."

"The Locarno Treaty guaranteed the western frontiers of Germany but left open the question of her eastern frontiers; the sign-post on the road to war pointed eastwards towards the Soviet state. Nor was the security of the frontiers of Czechoslovakia, Poland and other countries which had been created only recently, guaranteed.

"This constituted the second, in this case the political foundations of the Munich policy."

Apart from these preparations in the field of international politics, it was also necessary to secure Germany for the planned war crusade.

"Backed by the instructions and aid of foreign capitalists, the German imperialists gave power to the fascists, the most militant and reactionary political party of imperialism. An organizational basis was thus added to the economic and political foundations of the future Munich betrayal; the western imperialists found in the fascist leaders the executors of their designs."

"Aided by the monopolists of the United States, Great Britain and France, the fascists completed the necessary economic, diplomatic and military preparations, and got ready to strike. Throughout history there has not been one single predatory attack which did not resort to some kind of ideological disguise. The *conquistadors*, for example, set out for the New World not in order to acquire gold but in order to spread Christianity among other nations. The fascist aggressors set out to redivide the world in their own favour, but they disguised this with the idea of saving civilisation from Communism, and a pretended struggle against the Comintern. This constituted the ideological preparation of the war."

Abetted by the imperialists the fascist aggressors proceeded with their offensive.

"The subsequent developments unrolled as smoothly as a well-staged play. Just as they had handed over Abyssinia to the Italian fascists, the western Powers let Austria be swallowed by the German aggressors without offering any resistance whatsoever. Czechoslovakia was the next victim, and at Munich she was made the prey of the fascists."

"The Munich Agreement does not bear the signature of the United States, but this does not signify by any means that the United States do not have any responsibility for the betrayal. The United States simply managed to assume the role of mere 'observers'."

"The events at Munich revealed quite clearly that the role of an 'observer' may serve as a special method, a special form of disguising the aggressive role of the pretenders to world conquest."

"The United States maintained this role of observers, and seemed to remain in the background; yet as soon as anything 'went wrong' in the machinery for aiding and abetting fascism, they hastened to intervene in order to put it right."

If it be true that the imperialists were, by-and large, united against Czechoslovakia

"did any means exist for halting fascist aggression? Was it possible to defend peace? Were there any chances and ways of preventing a world war involving the loss of millions of lives, war-expenditures amounting to billions, and physical destruction on an immense scale? Such ways and means did, indeed, exist. A feasible and real way of preventing a war lay in the collective security of the non-aggressor states. The creation of such an alliance of peace-loving countries became the object of

a fierce struggle. And this struggle was led consistently, with perseverance and a clear aim in view by the Soviet Union. Her foreign policy was based on the Leninist concept of lasting peaceful co-existence between all countries, regardless of their social system."

"Life has shown that collective security was by no means a way of concealing the interests of the Soviet Union, or of ensuring only its own defence. It was nothing of the sort. The Soviet land was capable of defending itself—this had been amply proved by the failure of all attempts directed at the destruction of Soviet power, regardless of whether they took the form of a joint crusade of all imperialist Powers, or of war operations by individual agressors. In this struggle for peace the interests of the Soviet people were identical with the interests of the working people of all nations. The persistent struggle for collective security is an expression of the proletarian internationalism of Soviet foreign policy.

"The aim of Soviet foreign policy was peace throughout the world, and collective security against the threat of aggression was one of the most important means for realizing that aim."

The Soviet Government made supreme efforts towards strengthening the Czechoslovak-Soviet and the Franco-Soviet Alliance. It never ceased to point out that this policy—with the increasing threat of nazi Germany—constituted the best support and guarantee for Czechoslovakia's security and independence. The proposals of the Soviet Government were, however, turned down. But subsequent developments fully bore out the correctness of its view.

"In the tragic year of 1938, the Czech and Slovak peoples came to recognize clearly who were their sincere friends and who were their open and concealed enemies."

"The Soviet Union's struggle for collective security assumed special significance in the September days, when fascist Germany proceeded to put into operation the plan for the occupation of Czechoslovakia, which had been prepared and agreed upon with the Western Powers long before, and which constituted the first phase in the unleashing of a new war."

"The Nazi plan against Czechoslovakia assumed throughout all phases of its preparation that an attack against Czechoslovakia would not meet with any counter-actions on the part of Great Britain and France, and that the Soviet Union would not intervene either if France stood aside."

The joint resistance by the European non-aggressor states would have, therefore, been completely successful even without the use of armed force.

"Munich was a crime that need not have been committed. Fascism could have been stopped."

The main cause of Munich was, however, hatred of the U.S.S.R. and of everything progressive, and it is this same hatred which is reviving a 'Munich policy' to-day.

"As if all lessons taught by history had been forgotten, the policy of Munich is being continued."

"To-day just as it did in the thirties, this policy conceals within itself the seeds of a new war on a world-wide scale."

"Once already the Munich policy of the Western Powers brought Britain and France to the brink of a catastrophe —and it was the Soviet Union which saved them. The continuation of the same policy under present conditions might have even more dangerous consequences."

Gustav Bareš (Czechoslovakia)

THE PEOPLE OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WANTED TO FIGHT

(Contribution to the discussion)

During the years 1933-1938 the policy of Czechoslovakia was not determined by the will of her ruling circles alone, but often and even to a great extent by the will and action of the people.

"The policy of Czechoslovakia was the result of a powerful confliot within the country. On one side in this conflict stood the pro-Hitler classes, ever ready to capitulate, with the decisive role being played by the reactionary monopolistic bourgeoisie; on the other stood the vast majority of the Czech people, as well as a considerable part of the Slovak people, who were playing an increasingly active and determined role in the defence of democracy, of the Republic and of national independence. The core of these forces was the working class and their main political support was the Communist Party, which led and organized them.

"The influence of this popular democratic and patriotic movement in 1938 was tremendous."

"During the various periods of crisis this movement forced the Czechoslovak Government to take a more determined stand against Hitler and the pressure of the Western powers; it also demanded that stronger measures be taken for the defence of Czechoslovakia. The growth of this movement threatened to undermine the insidious plan behind the Munich policy. The British Minister in Prague, Mr. Newton, sent report after report to London on the growth and scope of this movement."

He did not try to conceal his apprehensions. An echo of this popular movement can also be found in the reports of the Soviet Minister in Prague, Mr. Alexandrovsky, whose attitude is, however, fundamentally different from that of Mr. Newton.

"On September 22 an event took place in Czechoslovakia which has few parallels in history: within less than 24 hours the Hodža Government, which had accepted the Anglo-French proposals agreed upon by Chamberlain at Berchtesgaden, was forced to resign in the face of a popular uprising. The people of Czechoslovakia, and primarily the working class, proved their firm determination to defend freedom and to resist a government of capitulation. At that time the popular movement also forced a general mobilization, carried through with unprecedented self-sacrifice and enthusiasm by the people."

"It was fear of the Czechoslovak people which determined the methods adopted at the Munich meeting. At the time it was held the conference no longer served its original purpose—to free France from her obligations towards Czechoslovakia—since these obligations had more or less been already cancelled by the Berchtesgaden ultimatum to Prague. The main objective of the Munich conference, with its drastic time limits and conspiratorial night sessions, was to deceive the Czechoslovak people, and to prevent a repetition of the Prague events of September 21 and 22 and, through an ultimatum by the four West European Powers, to enable Czechoslovak reaction and Beneš to capitulate, against the will of their own people."

"The popular uprising of September, 1938—though followed by Munich and the nazi occupation—became a source of strength for the nation-wide movement of resistance during the occupation, for the preparation of

the Slovak national uprising, for the partisan movement and the Prague uprising of May 1945. The national and democratic revolution of 1945, after the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Army, also had roots in this popular movement."

Toman Brod (Czechoslovakia)

THE POSSIBILITIES OF DEFENDING THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC IN 1938

(Contribution to the discussion)

The nazi plan of attack against Czechoslovakia bore the code name Operation Green. The final version of this plan was approved by Hitler on May 30, 1938. According to it, five armies with 39 divisions were to take part in operations against Czechoslovakia. The main line of attack was to run from Kozlí towards Olomouc, and from Vienna to Brno.

"The purpose of this break-through across Moravia was to divide Czechoslovakia into two parts, and there the main forces of the Czechoslovak army were to be destroyed within a few days and forced to surrender."

Later, at the beginning of September, the nazis decided to consider other possibilities of using the attacking German armies. Were the nazi hopes for a decisive victory in 1938 justified? Let us examine the strength of both belligerents.

"In 1938, Czechoslovakia was in a position to mobilize forty-five divisions, i. e., an army of approximately two million men. (It was envisaged that thirty-seven divisions would be used against Germany.) At that time the Czechoslovak army was one of the strongest not only in Europe, but in the world. Figures on its equipment vary somewhat. The number of its military aircraft has been put at 1,500, that of its tanks between 470 and 740, guns of all types and calibres between 4,200 and 5,700, and light and heavy machine guns at approximately 60,000."

"Experiences of World War II have shown that an army expecting decisive victory must have at least five-fold superiority in its main direction of attack. Such superiority was not available to the nazi leadership."

"If we accept the stated number of German divisions planned for attack against Czechoslovakia under Operation Green, i. e. thirty-nine divisions, we must conclude that the nazis were unable to ensure adequate superiority of arms and men, the more so since they deployed their armies along the Czechoslovak frontier in groups, thus weakening their striking power. In addition, the plan of attack did not contemplate the simultaneous deployment of all nazi divisions."

"It is, of course, obvious that nazi Germany, 60 million strong, would have been in a position to bring to bear the superiority of its material resources, if not at the outset, then certainly as time went on. Even so, there was no cause for excessive pessimism."

The Czechoslovak General Staff specifically called attention to this situation. The strength of the Czechoslovak Army was backed by the system of fortifications along the Czechoslovak frontier. Though still not complete in the summer of 1938, in its existing state it represented the equivalent of a number of trained divisions. This does not, of course, mean that

"Czechoslovakia was in a position to defeat the enemy's armies and put them to rout alone. Nor was this the plan of the Czechoslovak High Command. The Czechoslovak General Staff made plans for taking up positions of defence along a general line from North to South Bohemia, and even considered a possible orderly retreat to Slovakia. It assumed, however, that the nazis would fail to divide Czechoslovakia's territory, and that the Czechoslovak Army would delay the enemy at the frontier, and successively from other prepared positions, until

the arrival of effective help from abroad. It must be regretted that the Czechoslovak Government relied only on assistance from the West, and that the plan of operations did not envisage the participation of the Soviet Union."

The assistance of the Soviet Union could have exercised a decisive influence on the outcome of the war against Germany, even if the other allies had refused to come to Czechoslovakia's assistance.

"In the summer of 1938, 30 Soviet divisions stood in combat readiness on the Western borders of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Air Force was capable of intervening effectively and within a few hours in favour of Czechoslovakia."

"It is obvious, therefore, that the 1938 surrender by the Czechoslovak Army was not prompted by m i l i t a r y but by p o l i t i c a l considerations. The class interests of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie demanded that the wishes of the Western Powers be obeyed, and that the Munich Agreement be accepted."

Lubomier Liptàk, Candidate of Historical Science
(Czechoslovakia)

THE SLOVAK CATHOLIC BOURGEOISIE AND MUNICH

(Contribution to the discussion)

"The People's Party in 1938 took advantage of the difficult situation in which Czechoslovakia found herself in order to achieve its political aims, and did everything within its power to aggravate the situation. Identity of views on many vital issues made it the ally of Czechoslovakia's enemies. Hlinka's People's Party was rigidly opposed to an alliance with the U.S.S.R. and even with France. It was the advocate of an open fascist dictatorship; it had contact and relations with all the more important fascist movements in Europe, from Croatia to Belgium and Holland."

"In the year 1938, in the period of crisis, the People's Party was hand in glove with the Henleinists. At the beginning of February Hlinka concluded an agreement with representatives of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* on a joint programme of action. However, joint action with the Sudeten German fascists and even with the Hungarian revisionist parties aroused such a wave of indignation in Slovakia that the unstable position of the People's Party became fully apparent."

"Any analysis of the activities of the People's Party during the days of Munich will show that it did not play a decisive role in these events. It was more a tool than an active factor. Of course this does not in any way lessen the guilt of the Hlinka politicians, who willingly helped the nazis to destroy the Republic.

"On September 8th, Tiso concluded an agreement with the Henleinist Parliamentary Group as to joint procedure 'in the reconstruction of the State.' Other contacts with the nazis were secured by agents sent out by the People's Party to Vienna in the first half of September. The People's Party was only too pleased to obey the directives issued by the nazis. Evidence of this is the well-known demand for autonomy submitted to the President after Chamberlain's first meeting with Hitler at Berchtesgaden. Through the German Legation in Prague, the nazi Foreign Office on September 19th issued an order to the Henlein Deputy Kundt to ask the People's Party to submit the demand for autonomy the next day. Kundt was able to advise his superiors that this would be done, and that he had already taken the necessary measures to this end in the course of previous talks.

"In the circumstances, the demands raised by the People's Party obviously had no other purpose than blackmail, and they selected the most critical days to submit them—September 19th, and then September 26th. What is typical in this respect, however, is that they confined themselves to memoranda, to discussions with the Prime Minister and the President, and were incapable of arousing any popular support for their demands. It thus became apparent that the activities of the People's Party's leadership were in complete opposition to the opinions and actions of the great majority of the Slovak people."

After Munich Hlinka's men achieved autonomy in Slovakia. The Catholic bourgeoisie of the People's Party assumed dictatorship. This development, which meant a further weakening of Czechoslovakia, enabled German imperialism to create the conditions for the temporary dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in March, 1939.

Dr. Jaroslav Žourek (Czechoslovakia)

THE MUNICH AGREEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

(Contribution to the discussion)

"The circumstances under which the Munich Agreement was concluded do not permit the slightest doubt that from the very moment of its signing this agreement was null and void, and therefore not legally binding. This view is fully supported by classical international law, from which the following causes as to the nullity of the said agreement may be deduced:

"The Munich Agreement was contrary to the obligations arising from the Charter of the League of Nations."

"The Munich Agreement constituted a violation of the territorial integrity and at the same time of the political independence of the Czechoslovak Republic, and thus represented a flagrant violation of Articles 10 and 20 of the Charter. It must, therefore, in accordance with international common law, be considered null and void (non-existent). The Munich Agreement was in sharp contradiction to the fundamental principles of international law."

"It constituted a flagrant violation of Czechoslovak sovereignty, since it was concluded among the four powers, and its purpose was a far-reaching infringement of the territorial integrity of the Czechoslovak State. Moreover, it was concluded at a conference held in the absence of Czechoslovakia. The aforesaid agreement also violated Czechoslovakia's independence, since by handing over the frontier fortifications to the nazi aggressors the Czechoslovak State was in actual fact left at the mercy

of nazi Germany. Indeed, within less than six months, as a further phase of her armed aggression against Czechoslovakia, Germany occupied the remainder of the Czech lands and achieved political and military domination over Slovakia. Having as its purpose the violation of the territorial integrity and the destruction of the independence of the Czechoslovak state, the Munich Agreement was from the very first invalid."

"The Munich Agreement was imposed upon Czechoslovakia by acts of armed aggression and by the threat of more armed aggression."

"On September 17th, 1938, through the intermediary of the units of the Sudeten German Party, which it had armed and which was obeying its orders, the nazi Government launched an armed attack against Czechoslovakia. Further, the nazi Government made threats of armed attack. At a time when international law recognized war as a legitimate means for the settlement of international disputes, a threat of force would also have been a legitimate means. The elimination of war as a legal institution in 1928 signified a fundamental change in this respect. The use of threats of force in international disputes was thereby also ruled out. Legal negotiations among states, in particular international treaties, arrived at by force or a threat of force against a foreign state, must undoubtedly be considered invalid."

"Under these circumstances, the acceptance by the Czechoslovak Government on September 21, 1938, of the Anglo-French proposals and of the Munich Agreement of September 30th, being acts committed under the pressure of armed force and repeated threats of armed attack on the part of Hitler Germany, as well as under gross pressure from the British and French Governments, was from the very beginning null and void and was not legally binding. In consequence of this, all international treaties

either implementing or amending this agreement, in particular the Protocol on the Vienna Award issued in the dispute between Czechoslovakia and Horthy Hungary of November 2, 1938, are also null and void."

"The Munich Agreement was concluded in violation of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic."

"The Munich Agreement was accepted in the name of the President of the Republic and of the Government.

"It was thus accepted without the National Assembly having given its agreement, which procedure was essential if the acceptance of the Anglo-French proposals and of the Munich Agreement were to have validity. Therefore, even if there had been no other reason to consider the Munich Agreement invalid from the very beginning, this pact could not have been binding since the agreement of the National Assembly was lacking."

"The deceit of the nazi Government makes the Munich Agreement invalid."

"Hitler did not conclude the Munich Agreement with a view to finally resolving the conflict which the nazi Government had artificially provoked with the assistance of the German minority in Czechoslovakia, but only and exclusively in order to secure favourable conditions for the execution of the next stage of his criminal designs against the peace. From the very beginning of the negotiations, the nazi Government had no intention of honouring the agreement; it was only concerned with seizing the border regions of Czechoslovakia in the first stage, in order to facilitate the complete occupation of Czechoslovakia later. On October 7, 1938, the occupation of the border regions under the terms of the Munich Agreement was completed. As early as October 21, Hitler issued an order on the preparations for the liquidation of what remained of Czechoslovakia. On the part of the nazi Government, therefore, this was outright deceit.

This also makes the agreement null and void in its entirety."

"Each of the arguments cited would in itself suffice to prove the original nullity of the Munich Agreement. All of them together provide substantiation which cannot be refuted by legal arguments."

Dr. Antonín Šnejdárek (Czechoslovakia)

THE ROLE OF THE SUDETEN GERMAN NAZIS IN THE MUNICH EVENTS

(Contribution to the discussion)

"From the establishment of Czechoslovakia, two groups came into being among the Sudeten German bourgeoisie, one of which was orientated towards co-operation with the Czech bourgeoisie and sought to achieve a division of spheres of influence."

In the twenties this 'activist' group predominated politically. The economic crisis at the beginning of the thirties and its unfavourable economic consequences, which had a particularly serious effect in the border areas, changed this situation. The German bourgeoisie started to concentrate its forces in Czechoslovakia and to pursue a policy favouring dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. At the head of the anti-Czechoslovak movement stood Konrad Henlein, whose party had direct contacts with Berlin.

"If we analyze his policy we can see two lines taking shape: one, purely tactical, aimed at calming public opinion and ensuring the legal development of the Henlein movement and its operation in Czechoslovakia, the other, a strategic one, aimed at the liquidation of the Czechoslovak state, the incorporation of its border areas within the Reich, and its later subjugation to German imperialism."

This strategic design underwent no changes. As to the tactics, these may be divided into three phases. In 1936 there was a period of transition from the first to the

second phase, when Henlein sought to combine the new conception of 'loyalty to Germanism' with 'loyalty' to the Czechoslovak state.

"The third phase in the development of the tactics of the Henlein movement started in the spring of 1938. On April 24th, 1938, Henlein made public at the Congress of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* the so-called Karlovy Vary demands (eight points). This third phase was determined in the course of talks held between Henlein and the leadership of the NSDAP in Berlin... The men in the leadership of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* were, even before the party was founded, either agents of German intelligence, particularly of the military espionage service, the *Abwehr*, or were members of organisations which had connections with German espionage centres, such as the *Kameradschaftsbund*, among whose members figured such leaders of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* as Henlein, Ruth, Sebekowski and others.

"Henlein, in his capacity of agent of the German *Abwehr*, was under the direct command of the Commanding officer of the German espionage service, the Commander of the 'Sabotage and Diversion' Division, Major Groscourth."

"From the moment when Hitler determined to start preparations for Operation Green, the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* took part in these preparations as an active factor in the scheduled military attack of German imperialism against Czechoslovakia. Members of the Henlein FS acted as advisers to German military planners preparing the military attack against the territory of Czechoslovakia."

The plot of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* against Czechoslovakia came to a climax in the open armed uprising for which Henlein gave the signal on September 17th, 1938. The guilt of the Sudeten German fascists in the

dismemberment of Czechoslovakia is on record, and has been proved by documentary evidence.

"The attempts to whitewash them being made in recent years in certain bourgeois, and primarily revanchist, publications, cannot be interpreted except as attempts to revert to the policy of 1938 and the preceding years, i. e., a policy aimed at the destruction of the Czechoslovak state and the enslavement of the Czech and Slovak people under the yoke of German imperialism."

Dr. Gerhard Fuchs (German Democratic Republic)

THE BETRAYAL BY THE RIGHT WING SUDETEN GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS OF THE VITAL INTERESTS OF THE GERMAN AND CZECH WORKERS IN 1938

(Contribution to the discussion)

"At the time Czechoslovakia was threatened by nazism, the German Social Democratic Party (The DSAP), of the three socialist parties, faced particular responsibility for achieving unity of action among the working class, for it was among the German workers that the fascist movement, the 'fifth column' of German imperialism, was carrying out its subversive activities against the Czechoslovak Republic. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia strove consistently and systematically to achieve unity of action of all anti-fascist forces in the Sudeten region, which would then have been able to wage an effective struggle against the fascist agents and finally to liquidate them. It made numerous offers to the leadership of the German Social Democratic Party and to its organisations for a joint programme of struggle against the Henlein fascists, and also against Czech reaction. But the leadership of the DSAP rejected these offers, and forbade its members to co-operate with the communists."

The principal cause for this attitude must be sought in the circumstance that for many years the representatives of the German Social Democratic Party had abandoned the class position of the international proletariat and had come to accept the bourgeois ideology and bourgeois policies as their own.

"Wenzel Jaksch, who since 1921 had been a member of the Presidium of the DSAP and since March, 1938, had been its Chairman, published a programme in 1936 in which he presented his theoretical views and summed them up under the rather vague term of 'people's socialism' (*Volkssozialismus*). Jaksch rejected the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat and demanded that a proletarian revolutionary class party be replaced by a 'Democratic People's Party' (*Demokratische Volkspartei*), which would also include petty bourgeois sections in its membership. The fulfilment of these demands would have meant abandoning the programme of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a socialist system."

Jaksch's 'People's Socialism' can only be described as an attempt to revise Marxism in a pan-Germanic nationalist spirit.

"But class-conscious social democratic workers, in spite of the opposition of their leadership, together with their communist comrades and often at the risk of their own lives, waged a courageous struggle against Henlein's terroristic bands. It was at that time that 'the workers' leader' Jaksch started negotiating with the Henleinist fascists, of course behind the back of the members of his party, the workers.

"Dr. Emil Franzel acted as an intermediary in the establishment of contacts with the leaders of the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (SdP)."

"It must be stressed that the main service that the men around Wenzel Jaksch performed for the German monopolists, in 1938 and before, was that by their betrayal of class interests they prevented the creation of a proletarian united front based on the principles of internationalism. They thus played directly into the hands

of the Henlein movement, they smoothed the path for the aggressive policy of German imperialism. This can be described as nothing less than a shameful betrayal of the vital interests of the German and Czech workers. Immediately after the Munich Agreement the presidium of the German Social Democratic Party dissolved the party's organizations in the Sudeten region, thereby abandoning, unlike the Communists, all further attempts at continuing the fight against the fascist occupiers. Wenzel Jaksch bears a considerable share of the responsibility for the events which led to the loss of Czech national independence in 1938-1939 and for the fact that hundreds and thousands of Sudeten German workers, after their 'return' to Hitler Germany, lost their lives on the battlefields of Europe in the interests of German monopoly capitalists such as Krupp, Vögler, Zangen and Abs, and of the Sudeten capitalists like Schicht and Liebig, and that they finally had to leave the land of their birth."

Major Josef Hodic (Czechoslovakia)

CONTINUATION OF THE MUNICH POLICY BY THE WESTERN POWERS DURING WORLD WAR II

(Contribution to the discussion)

"For the Western Powers the Munich policy represented one of the means of resolving the basic conflicts between imperialism and socialism. The ruling circles of the United States, Great Britain and France did not, however, abandon this policy even after it had clearly failed, even after entering the war against Hitler Germany. During the war they continued to seek ways and means of reaching agreement with Germany and achieving the creation of a single front of all imperialist countries against the Soviet Union."

Records are available on negotiations held during the second World War between American, British and nazi representatives. One of these talks between Allen W. Dulles and Count M. Hohenlohe, and others, which took place in January and April, 1943, is mentioned in a publication of the Soviet Information Service issued in 1948 and entitled 'Falsifiers of History.' A document containing detailed information on these discussions was found recently in the archives of Hitler's Gestapo.

Between January and April, 1943, Allen W. Dulles (using the name Mr. Bull), special emissary of President Roosevelt in Europe, and his economic aide, Mr. Robert Taylor, alias Mr. Roberts, met with Count Hohenlohe, alias Paulus, an agent of the German Intelligence Service, and others in Berne and in Geneva.

"In addition to a number of minor questions, the talks dealt with the following two basic problems:

1) The errors committed by nazi foreign policy which had forced Great Britain and the United States to enter the war;

2) The post-war arrangement of Europe and Germany's position therein. At the same time the discussions clearly revealed the position of one section of American ruling interests with regard to the struggle for liberation waged by the Czechoslovak people and other nations, and their attitude towards the heroic fight of the people of the Soviet Union against the fascist occupiers."

"In the American view, the lack of consistency and sense of proportion in Germany's foreign policy led to the second World War."

"Fascist Germany, Dulles stressed, had disappointed the expectations of the West. Germany had not fully used the opportunities provided her by the Western Powers. She had started to introduce a new order in Europe by the methods used by the nazis on the home front. Thus Germany herself closed the door left open to her at Munich. It was her fault that not only the Latin and Slav nations, but also the so-called Germanic nations turned away from her.

"This situation inevitably brought the conclusion reached at Casablanca: to refuse to negotiate with Hitler's representatives. Dulles viewed this decision as a valuable instrument for exerting pressure. He was, however, willing to take steps in Washington with a view to negotiations being initiated with representatives of a serious opposition in Germany. The point was to establish close relations with groups that in post-war Germany could play a role which would fully correspond to American and British interests."

"The arrangement of post-war Europe had, according to Dulles, to be based on and proceed from the assumption that a future world war would break out between the United States and the U.S.S.R. Therefore the state and

industrial organization of Europe must be based on large units and areas. Not even Germany should be allowed to emerge from the war weakened, and a nation like Germany should not be forced to desperate heroism by injustice and misery. The German state must continue to exist as a factor making for order and reconstruction. There was no question of Germany being divided, or of the secession of Austria. A strong federal Germany with a neighbouring Danube Confederation would be a guarantee of order and reconstruction in Central and Eastern Europe. By expanding Poland to the East, and creating a strong Hungary and Rumania, a *cordon sanitaire* would be established against Bolshevism and Pan-slavism.

"The Czech question was of little importance to Dulles and Taylor. They both supposed that some solution within the framework of the Reich would eventually be acceptable. Dulles only scoffed at the guarantees given to the Czechs and Poles by Great Britain. He regarded British views on the arrangement of post-war Europe as old-fashioned."

"It was, however, possible to realise these plans only in the Western part of Europe. The countries of Eastern Europe, including Czechoslovakia, have definitely abandoned the policy of appeasement and of making piece-meal concessions to the German fascist aggressor."

Andrew Rothstein (Great Britain)

THE POLICY OF 'APPEASEMENT'

(Contribution to the discussion)

"My purpose is to offer some observations on the nature of the so-called policy of 'appeasement' and trace, if possible, its origins."

"The first striking feature of the policy of 'appeasement' practised by the British and French Governments is that it was never conducted at the immediate expense of the 'appeasers'."

"Secondly, the aim of the 'appeasers' was to strengthen and maintain the forces of fascism."

"In this sense the policy of 'appeasement' began in 1933, when the British and French Governments began to practise it at the expense of the German people in order to consolidate the power of Hitler."

"Why was this? Did not the appeasers know that this policy presented a potential danger to themselves? Of course the British and French Governments understood this at least as well as the thousands of anti-Fascists who were shouting this aloud after 1933. Moreover, there were several occasions when they showed that they understood it."

Not peace but war was the aim of appeasement—war by nazi Germany against the Soviet Union. Not fear of Hitler, but hatred of the U.S.S.R. was its purpose. This became particularly clear from the diplomatic documents, memoirs and biographies published after the war.

These documents also clearly show that the charges that Chamberlain 'yielded to,' 'surrendered to,' 'was intimidated by' Hitler are entirely beside the point.

"Chamberlain was only too anxious to collaborate with Hitler. He well knew that, as British Ambassador Henderson had written to Halifax from Berlin on August 6, 1938: 'If we really showed our teeth, Hitler would not dare to make war today'."

"But the whole point of the policy of 'appeasement' was to encourage Hitler to make war—only eastward, not westward."

"The policy of 'appeasement,' therefore, was a class policy with class roots. It was a policy of building up the power of nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as paladins of private property against the menace of socialism, hatred of the Soviet Union as the first socialist state and as the possible inspiration of peoples everywhere discontented with capitalism (the diplomatic documents of 1938 contain a mass of particularly vivid and previously unpublished evidence on this subject)."

"It is a matter of rejoicing for all participants in this conference, I am sure, that the Czechoslovak working class and the Czechoslovak people for their part have drawn the appropriate lesson from the experience of Munich for their own good and for that of the world. May all our peoples do the same."

Joanny Berlioz (France)

THE *MUNICHOIS* POLICY OF THE WESTERN POWERS

(Contribution to the discussion)

"The expressions *Munichois* and *Munichisme* have become a permanent part of the French political vocabulary."

"Today, as yesterday, we are encountering the spirit of Munich which actuates big business and reaction, and the label *Munichois* may be applied justly and with contempt to those who, motivated by their class egoism, continue to betray the national interests. The spirit of Munich had already made its appearance prior to September 29, 1938, much more subtly, of course, in the ranks of the French *haute bourgeoisie* and its servant, social democracy; it dated from the moment when Hitler, who had come to power in Germany, appeared to the enemies of the French people (moving politically to the left), as a welcome guardian of their money-bags."

In March, 1938, the *Anschluss* struck Europe like a clap of thunder. Czechoslovakia was next on the list.

"The French bourgeoisie was determined to abandon Czechoslovakia to her fate. Under the cloak of pacifism a campaign was developed in the press with the slogan 'Let's not die for the Czechs!' In *Les Temps*, the paper of the *Comité des Forges*, Joseph Barthélémy, well known professor of jurisprudence, expounded his doubts as to the real value of the Franco-Czechoslovak Treaty of Alliance, which, he claimed, was no longer binding, since it was bound to the Locarno Treaty which Hitler had torn to shreds."

Responsible statesmen such as Daladier and Bonnet equally made no secret of their desire to avoid the obligation of honouring these commitments.

"I do not wish to deprecate in any way the responsibility of British imperialism for the defeatism which led to Munich, but I believe that the share played by the French Governments is a considerable one. Moreover, London manoeuvred skilfully to push Paris to the fore at difficult moments."

"Only the French Communist Party understood clearly the danger that threatened France from the policy of co-operation with Germany and repeatedly raised its voice in warning, insisting that the price that Paris was willing to pay for agreement with Hitler was the complete encirclement of France."

In their search for the ways and means of capitulating to Hitler, the French representatives resorted to lies and falsifications.

"And thus they signed the Treaty of September 29th not, as they later claimed, to justify their acts, because this was required by fate, by history, but because they were fulfilling the will of capital, of the *haute bourgeoisie*. As Maurice Thorez stressed in his speech on October 7th at the Velodrome d'Hiver: 'September 29th will enter the pages of history as the greatest betrayal of France, of peace and of democracy ever committed by a republican government.' Nothing remained of France's word of honour. How had this happened?"

"Essentially the causes must be sought in the betrayal of the national interests of France by capital and its representatives. Munich is also an expression of their social and political conservatism. The men of the trusts, of the '200 families,' to use a term of the leading radicals, preferred Hitler to the Popular Front. They supported

his policy, even when it meant the enslavement of France, its destruction, as they knew full well from reading *Mein Kampf*, which is imbued with Hitler's irrational, insane hatred for France. Yet they aided and abetted him, for he had assumed the role of gendarme of international reaction, of the guardian of the cosmopolitan treasuries."

"We, the French Communists, are proud that at the time of Munich we did not give in, that we took the banner of national independence, of national interests, abandoned and trampled in the mud by the bourgeoisie, into our own hands. At our congresses at Villeurbanne (1936) and Arles (1937) we explained our international policy, which coincided with the interests both of the working class and the noble cause of progress, freedom and peace which our people must serve, in the interest of all the nations and if the cause of peace is to be saved. To this end, in spite of the fascist threat, our Party continued its policy of rallying the French nation around the working class, against the men of the trusts, who have no fatherland."

"We are aware that we saved the honour of France when we defended Czechoslovakia in all circumstances, and when we waged a courageous struggle against Munich and its consequences."

Prof. Walter Bartel (German Democratic Republic)

THE STRUGGLE OF THE PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN GERMANY AGAINST FASCISM AND AGGRESSION IN 1938

(Contribution to the discussion)

"In 1937-1938 there existed promising conditions for the creation of a United Front of the opponents of the Hitler regime. The campaign of international solidarity with Republican Spain united Social-Democrats and Communists and generated a strong wave of sympathy within middle-class circles."

This fact, as can be seen from the regular reports of the Gestapo, disquieted the nazi terror machine, which kept a close watch on the mood of the masses of the people.

"In the course of 1938 the idea of a People's Front gained popularity inside Germany. The reason for this was to be found in the great success of the Popular Front Government in France and in the workers' warm sympathies for the glorious struggle of the Spanish people against fascist intervention."

This was also admitted in the Gestapo reports.

"One of them records widespread sympathies with the idea of a Popular Front on the part of the German workers, but also the negative attitude to any kind of co-operation with the Communist Party of Germany and to any idea of building a broad anti-fascist People's Front against the Hitler regime on the part of the Social-Democratic leadership abroad. It should be emphasized

that this negative attitude became most fateful when towards the end of 1936, under the direct influence of the great German writer Heinrich Mann, a German Popular Front Group was created in Paris, which included among its members Social-Democrats, Communists and intellectuals belonging to no party."

By stepping up its brutal measures of terror, the Hitler Government attempted to break the resistance of the workers and other strata of the population against increased exploitation and war preparations.

In spite of this that resistance reached considerable proportions by September 1938. This fact was underlined in the resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany at its Berne Conference (January 30—February 1, 1939). It speaks in so many words of a September Crisis and emphasizes, that those September days constitute the most important event in the life of the German People since the Hitler regime's accession to power.

"The resolution also described the various forms, the width and the topicality of the resistance which had reached a level never attained before during the Hitler regime. Workers held organized group discussions in the factories, machines were run at lower speeds, there were also individual work stoppages, miners left the coal-face, workers met at canteens, all of which meant a slowing down and disorganization of production. The most active anti-fascist workers organized whispering campaigns against the threatening war, distributed leaflets and painted slogans on the walls. There were even cases of particularly brave workers who held small peace meetings at which they made a short speech.

"Great activity was developed by the women, who openly opposed the mobilization and demonstrated their hatred for war in the streets, in shops and market places.

The resistance spread even to the villages. Peasants refused to have their horses and carts confiscated. Of particular significance was the fact that a number of German soldiers deserted from the fascist *Wehrmacht* in the late summer of 1938. In Czechoslovakia the newspapers *Rudé právo* and *Rote Fahne* carried in August and September 1938 reports on and statements of German army deserters."

"These encouraging expressions of the growing resistance on the part of broad sections of the people were, however, impeded by one decisive factor, which assumed already then, but even more in the subsequent developments, a fateful significance. All these anti-fascist actions of 1938, however brave and even heroic they may have been, were carried out separately and in isolation."

"Above all the working-class itself was caught by the September events unprepared to assume the leadership of the strong people's opposition against Hitler's war policy."

Yet even in spite of this, those events will remain an important landmark in the history of the anti-fascist struggle in Germany.

Academician P. Constantinescu-Jasi (Rumania)

RUMANIA AND THE MUNICH AGREEMENT

(Contribution to the discussion)

"The internal situation prevailing in Rumania in 1937 and 1938 was characterized by mounting class conflicts which resulted in the establishment of a royal dictatorship by Carol II in February, 1938. In the sphere of foreign relations the policy of the rapidly-changing governments resulted in the weakening of the former alliance with France and Great Britain, and in closer ties with Hitler Germany, while the position in relation to the Soviet Union remained unchanged."

"The coming to power of the reactionary Government of Gogy and Cuza at the beginning of 1938 strengthened even further the ties between official Rumania and Hitler Germany and her foreign policy."

"The policy of isolating Czechoslovakia in 1938, persistently pursued by Hitler, was also accepted by the Rumanian Governments in spite of bombastic expressions of sincere friendship. Rumania's Governments had long been ready to renounce the Little Entente."

"The policy of collective security pursued systematically by the Government of the Soviet Union at that time continued to be disregarded by the leading representatives of both Yugoslavia and Rumania, who had set out on the road of betrayal."

"In August, 1938, Hitler passed to direct attack through diplomatic channels, namely by exerting pressure on Czechoslovakia's allies, Rumania and Yugoslavia, to force them to convince the Czechoslovak Government to accept the solution proposed by Germany."

The ultimate position of the reactionary governments of Rumania and Yugoslavia depended on the development of the international situation. The position of Rumania during the Munich crisis was of special importance, because the Soviet Union could have come to Czechoslovakia's assistance across Rumanian territory. The reactionary Rumanian Government preferred to side with Hitler rather than to support a policy of peace in cooperation with the Soviet Union.

"At that time the ruling class of Rumania used its foreign policy to help smash the policy of collective security, isolate Czechoslovakia, and betray a former ally. Such was the attitude of the ruling class, who sought to strengthen their political and economic position by closer ties with Hitler."

"The attitude of the people of Rumania, primarily that of the working class headed by its party, the Communist Party of Rumania, was a fundamentally different one.

"The Communist Party, availing itself of every means at its disposal, its illegal publications or its organizations and legal publications, continued to expose the policy of betrayal of the ruling class in the face of the nazi danger which threatened the world; it spared no effort to call attention of the people to the steady movement in the direction of fascism which the country was taking, supported by the fascist parties and also by the so-called historic parties."

It thus sought to rouse the vigilance and conscience of the nation, which was to throw off the fascist yoke six years later.

Prof. Kazimierz Piwarski, Corresponding member
of the Polish Academy of Sciences (Poland)

POLISH FOREIGN POLICY 1936-1938

(Contribution to the discussion)

"I would like to limit myself to a matter connected with Polish government policy on Hitler Germany and Czechoslovakia and, in particular, to call attention to two aspects of this policy bound up in Colonel Beck's conceptions of the so-called policies of 'balance' and 'the third force,' which were to have ensured the Polish state a position of power, but which ended instead in a complete fiasco and played their part in bringing about the fall of the Polish state in 1939."

Policy of 'Balance' 1935-1937

"Polish foreign policy, following the death of Pilsudski, was marked by the policy of so-called Polish-German friendship."

At the same time, Colonel Beck made every effort to introduce the hypocritical policy of balance.

"Closely bound to this was the conception of *miedzymorza* (intermarium), i. e., a plan to group the chain of states from the Baltic to the Black Sea under the political leadership of Poland. In 1936 a proposal to create a regional system of collective security in the Baltic was submitted by the U.S.S.R. to the League of Nations. However, the Scandinavian countries opposed this, vigorously supported by Polish diplomacy. During this period, Beck established contact with Britain (1935-1937), which also opposed implementation of the Soviet plans. Polish

policy participated in attempts to break up the Little Entente."

"Poland carried out a policy of friendship with Hungary and fascist Italy. Polish policy in the Danube area was sharply anti-Soviet, and anti-Czechoslovak."

Policy of a Third Force—1938

"Beck's policy counted on the inevitability of the *Anschluss* of Austria and partition of Czechoslovakia."

The part played by Poland in the encirclement of Czechoslovakia has now been fully confirmed and clarified by creditable sources. Beck was well informed on Hitler's plans for Czechoslovakia.

"Relations between Poland and Czechoslovakia reached a breaking point during the September crisis. Beck fostered the hope that the British Government, in its dealings with Hitler, would bear Polish claims on Czechoslovakia in mind. London and Paris, however, rejected the Polish demand for a plebiscite in the Cieszyn (Teschen) area. Hitler, conversely, submitted the question of resolving the Polish and Hungarian demands to Chamberlain at Godesburg for tactical reasons. At the same time, the Polish Government sent notes to London, Paris and Rome, demanding the same status for the Polish minority in Czechoslovakia as the German minority. The Czechoslovak Government, under British and French pressure, declared its willingness to make concessions to Poland (September 25, 1938). The Polish Government demanded the unconditional secession of Silesian Teschen. Munich brought disappointment to Beck: the dictates of the four great powers would be implemented without the participation of Poland. On October 1, 1938, an ultimatum was issued to Czechoslovakia; Polish troops occupied

Teschen. In the conflict with German troops over Bohumín, Hitler temporarily retreated. Beck's anti-Czech policy was sharply criticized by broad sections of Polish society, not only by workers and farmers, but also by the numerous opposition groups within the Polish bourgeoisie."

Prof. Henryk Batowski (Poland)

THE QUESTION OF A 'THIRD EUROPE' IN POLISH FOREIGN POLICY IN 1938

(Contribution to the discussion)

Poland played a fateful and negative role in the events of 1938.

"Direction of Polish foreign policy in the bourgeois Republic which originated in 1918 was not in the hands of progressive-thinking politicians, but was controlled chiefly by right-wing nationalists who were governed by class interests, reflected notably in their attitude towards the Soviet Union."

When Pilsudski seized power in 1926, the reactionary trend in Polish foreign policy was intensified. It continued to remain vehemently anti-Soviet and, in addition, was directed against the Little Entente and Czechoslovakia.

Under the guidance of Colonel Beck, "the groundwork was laid for a rapprochement with Hitler Germany, with which the Warsaw ruling clique was aligned through bonds of mutual anti-Soviet tendencies. Beck, from the very onset, misjudged the situation and erroneously assumed that Germany would relinquish its power interests in the Baltic area and south-eastern Europe, in order to co-operate with Poland, which was temporarily in the interests of German foreign policy. German diplomacy was much more skilful than Polish, however, and capable of cleverly veiling its true aims, which included the desire to subjugate Poland."

Beck's conception of a 'Third Europe,' which was to have prepared the defence of the smaller nations lying in Central Europe, gradually dominated Polish foreign policy. Its purpose was to create a third force between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.

"This was an unrealistic conception in every way and was not only opposed to the interests of the nations concerned but was also without significance in general. Its revisionism, anti-Sovietism, and hostile attitude towards such an important factor as Czechoslovakia represented three fundamental errors, which doomed this policy from the very beginning."

"Today there is no need for a 'Third Europe,' because a fraternal alliance of all the central European states exists, together with that East European great power which protects these states from all danger."

Josef Chudek (Poland)

POLAND'S PART IN THE MUNICH EVENTS

(Contribution to the discussion)

"It is known that Poland's Foreign Minister, Josef Beck, counted on being invited to the Munich Conference and assumed that he would be treated there as an equal. He was almost convinced that Munich would be a conference of six countries and not of four countries."

"The idea of Poland's participation in the Munich Conference was above all opposed by Hitler, who—it seems—wanted to avoid any kind of meeting with Beck. The Polish Foreign Minister, on the other hand, would have liked to meet Hitler, as was shown by the various steps he took in this connection. We find the following significant passage in his instructions to the Polish Ambassador Lipski concerning a meeting that was to take place between the latter and Hitler on September 20:

'Should my presence be necessary, I am prepared to enter into contact with the Chancellor or with Göring and to disregard difficulties of a technical or political nature.'

"Hitler was, however, not the only one to oppose Poland's participation in the Munich Conference."

Chamberlain was against it.

"If I dwell on the fact that Poland was not present at Munich, I am doing so not in order to act as an advocate for a partner who was ignored, but in order to show that the dealings at Munich showed the utter failure of Beck's foreign policy. Hitler clearly gave him to understand that he regarded him not as a partner, but a mere instrument of his own policy."

"From that moment onwards Beck proceeded on a policy of improvisation."

"Poland's selfish manoeuvres frustrated the organization of collective defence in 1938. Poland, spreading the myth of being a strong country, made her claims against Czechoslovakia on the model of Hitler Germany. The road which Poland took at a time when she herself was under the shadow of the aggressive designs of Germany, appears in the light of contemporary study of history to have been an infinitely naive line of policy. The collapse of Poland in 1939 began at the moment when Czechoslovakia became the victim of German aggression in 1938."

Dr. Lazslo Szigmond (Hungary)

HUNGARY AND THE MUNICH AGREEMENT

(Contribution to the discussion)

At the time of Munich the reactionary Hungarian Government was closely associated with the nazis and shared in the preparations to dismember Czechoslovakia.

"For many years the counter-revolutionary Hungarian régime had tried to give the world the impression that it was the most reliable policeman against bolshevism and revolutionary uprisings in the Danube basin, a mercenary soldier who hesitated at nothing."

"From the very beginning Hungary was condemned by Hitler to play the part of a battering ram. Czechoslovakia was to be dismembered 'indirectly,' and for this purpose the national minorities in general, and the Hungarian minority in particular, were given what the German fascists considered an important task."

At the onset, when the attitude of the Western Powers was not quite clear, the nazis considered

"it necessary to stimulate somewhat the fighting spirit of Hungarian ruling circles, as it had considerably diminished in consequence of certain pessimistic confidential reports on the economic, political and military situation in Germany. These reports, submitted by the Hungarian chiefs-of-staff to the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, described Hitler's position as very precarious. The uncertainty increased further when fears arose in the minds of the Hungarians that the conflict between Czechoslovakia and Germany might not retain a local

character but might spread with the entry of England and France into the war.

"In the first days of September, Germany opened up a powerful propaganda campaign against Czechoslovakia. It was to serve a double purpose: to put an end to the hesitation in those countries which Germany had selected as its satellites, and to deceive world public opinion so as to find an excuse for an attack on Czechoslovakia."

The co-operation between Hungary and nazi Germany proved very dangerous for Hungary. As a result the Hungarian communists

"set themselves the task of unmasking Hitler Germany's underhand dealings regarding Austria and Czechoslovakia. They used their newspaper, *Dolgozók Lapja* (Workers Paper) for that purpose, and pointed out the danger inherent for the Hungarian people."

The communists never ceased to point out

"that German imperialism and militarism were the common enemy of Czechoslovakia and Hungary and of all nations in eastern and south-eastern Europe."

"It is a well-known fact that Hungary was completely subjugated by Germany as a result of the 'evolutionary path' of Horthy and his clique. This was used instead of open military intervention, with its greater risks, and on the surface a legal continuity was maintained. This did not change the fundamental fact: Hungary was condemned to the same fate as Czechoslovakia, the only difference being in date and order. That it occurred in this way was due to the fact that Horthy and his clique aided and abetted in the destruction of Czechoslovakia, an event that inevitably led to the undermining of Hungary's security."

"The result is well-known: One after another the states involved—including Hungary—succumbed and came under

Hitler's heel. They owe their liberation to the historic victory of the Soviet Union, which lent wings to the resistance movement, whose main force was the proletariat and whose leader was the Communist Party. Life has demonstrated once more that the national liberty and independence of the nations of eastern and south-eastern Europe and their building of a socialist society is inseparably bound up with the power of the working class led by the Communist Party."

Dezider Csizmadia (Czechoslovakia)

THE ROLE OF THE HUNGARIAN BOURGEOISIE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN DISMEMBERING THE REPUBLIC

(Contribution to the discussion)

"The Hungarian bourgeoisie in Czechoslovakia never reconciled itself to the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic for two fundamental reasons: The first, intense competition in which the stronger force—the Czech bourgeoisie—ruled the field, and as part of the ruling nation fully used its advantageous position against its Hungarian competitors. The second, the most advanced sections of the Hungarian people in Czechoslovakia were 'apostles of the class struggle' as the Hungarian bourgeoisie complained."

Characteristic of its policy in 1938 was the lack of comprehension of "the danger emanating from Hitler Germany."

"In order to put its plans into effect, the bourgeoisie won over the politically-undeveloped people with theories of Christian socialism and national unity. Both conceptions served to overcome the sharply-defined class conflicts between the Hungarian people and the Hungarian landlords. With the help of these ideas, the Hungarian bourgeoisie was determined to bring the landless farmer and impoverished proletarian to regard the capitalist and the landlord not as their exploiters, against whom they should fight, but in the spirit of Christian charity as their fellow-men, whom they should love."

"The reason why the Hungarian bourgeoisie was able

to follow such a demagogic policy was that the Hungarian people had been wronged. They were victims of social and national oppression. The Hungarian bourgeoisie, however, never represented the interests of the Hungarian working people."

"Following the annexation of southern Slovakia to Hungary, the Hungarian bourgeoisie received high praise from the Horthyites. On November 4, 1938, Prime Minister Imrédy expressed his gratitude for their efforts."

Prof. Tushe Vlakhov (Bulgaria)

THE PENETRATION OF HITLERISM INTO BULGARIA, AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE MUNICH POLICY AND FASCISM

(Contribution to the discussion)

"Revanchism, fear of proletarian revolution and the vested interests of the wealthy sections of the population were the basic factors which facilitated the penetration of Hitler's influence into Bulgaria. Although there was no treaty of alliance between monarcho-fascist Bulgaria and Germany in the period from 1936 to March 1, 1941, Bulgaria could, in fact, be considered Germany's ally.

"The Bulgarian bourgeoisie and the monarcho-fascist Government reacted to the *Anschluss* as to something completely normal. At the time that the crisis over the so-called Sudeten German question flared up, the Bulgarian bourgeoisie was completely behind the Hitler aggressors."

Munich was acclaimed by the Bulgarian bourgeoisie.

"Hitler was praised as a hero who had contributed to the disintegration of an old and unjust system. When in March, 1939, Hitler's troops occupied Bohemia and Moravia and the Hungarians the Subcarpathian Ukraine, the Bulgarian bourgeois press, including the Government daily *Dnes*, was quick to justify this brutal fascist act."

The Bulgarian bourgeoisie confirmed its orientation towards Hitlerite Germany on March 1, 1941, by joining the so-called Triple Alliance. This step was the culmination of the policy of betrayal of the national interests it had pursued throughout this period.

"The penetration of Hitlerism into Bulgaria was accomplished with the complete co-operation of the King, of those sections of the bourgeoisie and the army that had come under fascist influence, with the acquiescence of the bourgeois opposition and the relative passivity of the petty bourgeoisie. Under these circumstances, which objectively facilitated the penetration of Hitlerism, the Bulgarian Communist Party was not in a position to halt this process. One should not forget that Bulgarian fascism was no less barbarous or cruel than Hitler fascism. For almost two decades the Bulgarian Communist Party waged a determined struggle against fascism."

Thousands of its members fell in this struggle. Yet the Party did not give up. At the time of Munich and on March 15th, 1939, it stood firmly on Czechoslovakia's side. While the Bulgarian bourgeoisie applauded Munich and the occupation of Czechoslovakia, the workers and the progressive intellectuals reacted with indignation to this betrayal of their Czechoslovak ally by the Western imperialists, and to the attack by Hitler Germany.

"The Bulgarian people have not forgotten the assistance given them by Czech teachers, professors, archaeologists, painters, musicians, technicians and others who in the first years after the liberation came to Bulgaria, and some of whom have left a lasting imprint on the cultural life of the country.

"Progressive Bulgarian public opinion could not remain silent in face of this terrible crime committed against the Czechoslovak people. The Bulgarian Communist Party appealed to the people in both the cities and in the countryside to protest. Groups of the Union of Working-class Youth, operating underground, organized a leaflet campaign against Hitler aggression. The democratic women of Bulgaria issued an appeal calling for the defence of Czechoslovakia. The students of Sofia

University issued and distributed leaflets against the Hitlerite barbarians and in defence of Czechoslovakia and the Slav peoples. On March 16, 1939, the students of the university and of the academy of art interrupted the lectures, left the lecture halls, and held a protest demonstration in the university courtyard against this crime against the fraternal Czechoslovak people. On March 17th, the students organized another large-scale demonstration which, in spite of the attempts of the police to halt it, succeeded in marching to the Czechoslovak Legation."

The protests against the occupation of Czechoslovakia were part of the struggle against Hitler and Bulgarian fascism. The Bulgarian people emerged as the victors from this hard and bitter struggle in September, 1944.

Dr. Alexander Ort, Candidate of Historical Science
(Czechoslovakia)

MUNICH AND THE LITTLE ENTENTE

(Contribution to the discussion)

The Little Entente was formed, primarily, to counter the danger which its participants felt was threatening them from Hungary; to start with the Governments of the countries of the Little Entente feared the danger of her revolutionary influence, later they felt threatened by the danger of the restoration of the Hapsburg monarchy to the unoccupied throne of Hungary.

"At the same time, of course, the formation of the Little Entente also constituted a part of the plan for the creation of a *cordon sanitaire* against the Soviet Union, which was being pursued by all the imperialist Powers."

The anti-Soviet line of the Little Entente lost its significance, however, as soon as Hitler came to power in Germany.

"The leading role played by nazi Germany in the anti-Soviet plans of imperialism inevitably led to a decline in the importance of the Little Entente. Its member states, moreover, barred one of Germany's roads of attack against the Soviet Union, in addition to constituting an area which had traditionally been an objective of German imperialist expansion."

"The States of the Little Entente were thus confronted with a dilemma, which became more and more acute as time went by. On the one hand they could endeavour to maintain the *status quo* in Central Europe which was to the advantage of all three member States; this implied

following the policy of collective security which was being pursued in Europe by the Soviet Union with the temporary and half-hearted support of France and several other countries. The alternative was to become more closely linked with the anti-Soviet line-up, but this involved subordination to Germany's influence, which constituted a grave threat to the independent existence of the States of the Little Entente themselves."

In the thirties the Governments of Rumania and, above all, Yugoslavia came under the sway of reactionary elements who sabotaged any policy of collaboration with the Soviet Union.

"In spite of this unfavourable development, the Little Entente retained its significance mainly because of the fact that one of the routes by which the Soviet armies might have sped to the aid of Czechoslovakia in case of a German attack led across Rumanian territory."

Negotiations on this question

"proceeded very slowly in view of the unwillingness of the bourgeois Governments to collaborate with the Soviet Government in a real and effective manner."

"The decision as to whether the Soviet army would be permitted to cross Rumanian territory depended on a series of factors which could either facilitate or hamper it. What position and attitude would be taken by the Rumanian Government depended very much on the general international situation."

"Germany paid special attention to the question of the possible march of the Soviet armies across Rumanian territory in order to come to the aid of Czechoslovakia, for—as is shown by the reports of the ambassador in Moscow—she felt somewhat anxious about the possibilities of an intervention by Soviet forces."

Nazi diplomacy was therefore intent on breaking up the Little Entente altogether.

"But the pressure exerted by nazi Germany and her collaboration with the Horthy régime in Hungary, which was supposed to lead to the disintegration of the Little Entente, also had a reverse effect. There was growing fear lest a Hungarian attack linked with German aggression against Czechoslovakia might not be followed by similar actions against the other members of the Little Entente. For this reason the meeting of the Permanent Council of the Little Entente which was held in Bled in August 1938 did not result in any further disintegration of the Little Entente, but led, on the contrary, to a closer rallying of its members in view of the possible emergence of new threats. Although the Czechoslovak plan for the conclusion of a special treaty on mutual aid in the event of such a contingency was rejected, the statesmen of the Little Entente declared, nevertheless, that they would act in concord in such a case.

"The adoption of this attitude was due in no small measure to public opinion in Yugoslavia and Rumania, which was almost unanimously in favour of threatened Czechoslovakia."

The example of Rumania and Yugoslavia shows clearly that in 1938 even governments which were composed primarily of reactionary politicians could be influenced by the attitude of the broad masses. This fact also played an important part in relation to the potential defence of Czechoslovakia against fascist Germany.

Dr. Václav Král (Czechoslovakia)

THE ROLE OF MONOPOLIES IN THE PREPARATION AND REALISATION OF MUNICH

(Excerpt from an address to the conference)

During the imperialist period monopolies are of decisive significance, not only in the economies of capitalist countries, but also in their political plans and actions.

"The German monopolists used fascism as an instrument for achieving their old aims, i. e. the re-division of markets and raw-material resources by means of war, by means of violence. In this connection South-eastern Europe had always been considered in Germany as a special interest-sphere of German imperialism. Czechoslovakia was the key to that region.

"Whereas in the first few years after the first World War British and French capital had commanded important economic positions in South-eastern Europe, their position was significantly weakened during the course of the subsequent development of the economies of the Balkan States."

During the World Economic Crisis and the following years Germany succeeded in expanding her influence in this area to a marked extent.

"In the years before the second World War the development of trade relations between Germany and the countries of South-eastern Europe already showed clearly that Germany did not intend—and under the given circumstances could not even intend—to carry out commodity exchanges on a normal commercial basis, but that she intended to dominate the economic resources of the

Danube basin by force, in order to strengthen her war potential. But the road to the Danube led through Czechoslovakia.

"The occupation of Czechoslovakia meant that Germany could eliminate her competitors in trade with Danube countries, that she could use Czechoslovakia's capital investments in the Balkan countries for the purpose of strengthening the influence of German monopolies in that area, and, finally, that she could also significantly improve her military strategic position in South-eastern Europe. It was the German intention to seize Czechoslovakia not by means of an armed conflict but by some kind of agreement, even though it was clear that any such agreement could only be concluded under the threat of war.

"German fascism threatened not only the Czechoslovakia which had been established at the time of the defeat of German imperialism in the first World War, but also the Czech bourgeoisie which had strengthened its economic positions at the expense of the former allies of German imperialism. Yet the leaders of Czech finance capital, overlooking the fact that the Czechoslovak State had come into being at the time of the defeat of German imperialism and that Czech capital had expanded at the expense of German big business, sought to meet the danger of German fascist aggression by negotiating an agreement with German imperialism. In order to reach such an agreement they were prepared to give up their existing alliances, which were of a clearly anti-German character."

"The consequences of this policy of retreat, however, were entirely different from what its instigators had expected of it. Whereas the Czech Men of Munich believed that their concessions would appease Hitler and would satisfy the demands of German imperialism, the very opposite happened: their policy actually increased the

aggressiveness of German imperialism and the greed of the German monopolies."

The rise to power of German fascism also brought about a gradual change, after 1933, in the structure of capital holdings in Czechoslovakia.

"The second half of the thirties witnessed a period of capital flight from Czechoslovakia. This was not confined to capitalists who had good reasons to fear the dangers arising from fascist anti-Semitism, but also extended to French and British capital. This fact in itself was a telling indication that the West had already decided, in the years prior Munich, to retreat from Central and South-eastern Europe, which was to become an exclusive sphere of influence of German imperialism."

"The leading political personalities in Czechoslovakia at that time understood quite clearly that this flight of French and British capital from Czechoslovakia and South-eastern Europe could only mean that the Western Powers would not stand by Czechoslovakia when the decisive moment arose. Under those circumstances there developed two trends in Czech policy. The political group which was centred round President Beneš was convinced that Czechoslovakia could only maintain her existence with the aid of allies, and used every means at its disposal to halt the capital flight from Czechoslovakia. But the leaders of Czech finance capital, in the first place Preiss, who acted for the powerful *Živnostenská banka*, and Beran, who represented the various groups of agrarian capitalists, were working for a direct agreement with German fascism; they were not interested in the maintenance of allied foreign capital holdings and tended to welcome their withdrawal, in the belief that they themselves might easily acquire important economic advantages which had hitherto been held by certain other Czechoslovak, Viennese or Western European capitalists."

"Long before Munich, Preiss and Beran spread the view that the Western Powers would not stand by Czechoslovakia at the critical moment and that they were determined to hand over Central and South-Eastern Europe to Germany. From this assumption, which actually corresponded to the objective situation, the leaders of Czech finance capital proceeded to draw conclusions which were of a thoroughly class nature. They demanded that Czechoslovakia should sever her existing alliances and should come to an agreement with Germany. The representatives of Czech big business thought that little Czechoslovakia could thus become a treaty partner of aggressive Germany."

The perspective of a united campaign with the German monopolies and the prospects of war prosperity seemed to hold out the promise of exceptional profits. There even seemed to be some hope of a share in the booty from the expected occupation of Eastern and South-eastern Europe.

"Yet, regardless of the subjective aims and hopes of the leaders of Czech finance capital, the occupation of Czechoslovakia brought about the merging of Czech finance capital with the German monopolies, obviously to the advantage of the stronger of the two groups. In some cases the mergers were effected by undisguisedly violent means, in others they were realized on the Czech side to be an inevitable necessity, arising from the political events of September 1938 and March 1939. The *Živnostenská banka* alone succeeded in taking advantage of contradictions between German competitors at least to the extent that it maintained a relative degree of independence; in the view of the occupation authorities, however, this independence was to last only to the end of the war, when the final reckoning was to be made in the Czech provinces. The overwhelming majority of

other Czech combines became mere branches of the German monopolies."

"On the whole, however, the Czech combines as part of the German monopolies did manage to maintain their monopoly profits. War prosperity and the militarization of the entire economy made it possible for them to reach an unprecedented level of profits."

"The capital link-up between Czech combines and the German monopolies—regardless of the manner in which it came about—and the full participation of Czech industry in war production meant, of course, that Czech finance capital objectively aided German imperialism in the realization of its aggressive aims. This brought about the closest possible political dependence of the Czech *haute bourgeoisie* on nazi Germany, which found open political expression in Hácha's political collaboration with the Occupation Power."

It was the political experience of this policy of collaboration by the Czech *haute bourgeoisie* during the years of the occupation and their attitude before Munich

"which made possible the carrying out of the programme of expropriating finance capital—which had thus discredited itself—after the war, with the support of a considerable section of the medium and small bourgeoisie. The logical consequence of the defeat of German imperialism was the departure of finance capital from the life of the peoples of Czechoslovakia."

Dr. Hans Radandt (German Democratic Republic)

ON THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND TO MUNICH

(Contribution to the discussion)

"Every significant event in the policy of a capitalist state has its roots in the pursuit of power on the part of the dominating monopolies of that state.

"The fact that the German monopolies were apparently not actively involved in the Munich Agreement does not mean that they had nothing to do with it. We know, after all, that the fascist Government of Germany, led by Hitler, was merely the executive power of the most important and rapacious monopolies. It was in this capacity that the fascist statesmen played their part in the Munich Agreement; in this capacity they had their orders to bring Czechoslovakia into the sphere of influence of those very monopolies."

"At the beginning of 1937 the German monopolies became greatly interested in foreign securities, particularly those of Czechoslovakia, Austria and the countries of South-eastern Europe."

"The German monopolies, however, were not only interested in acquiring Czechoslovak securities, they were out to lay their hands on those industrial enterprises which were of decisive importance. The leading role in the preparation of these designs was allotted to the economic departments of the monopolies. At the beginning of 1938, i. e. just before the start of Germany's foreign political drive, these departments were instrueted to collect all available material on Czechoslovakia's economy, on the different branches of production and particularly on individual firms and combines."

"In the course of 1938 the *Dresdner Bank*, which was one of the main participants in the German monopolies' campaign of pillage against Czechoslovakia, prepared very thoroughly for the subsequent expansion of its power by building up its information files on Czechoslovak firms."

"The same goes for the economic department of *I. G. Farben*. Whereas up to 1937 Czechoslovakia had scarcely figured in its reports, from July to September 1938 this department prepared not less than eight reports on Czechoslovakia's economy."

"By July 1938 *I. G. Farben* had developed its strategic plans to such an extent that it made a clear distinction between its short-term aims for the so-called Sudeten majority districts and the more distant aims for the territories which were to become the Protectorate and the Slovak State."

Immediately after Munich, at the beginning of October 1938, *I. G. Farben Industries A. G.* and *Chemische Fabrik von Heyden A. A.* founded the firm *Chemische Werke Aussig—Falkenau GmbH*. By October 11, 1938, all plants in Ústí and Falknov had been completely incorporated into this new firm.

"The fact that this transaction could be carried out so rapidly proves that the preparations for the economic seizure of Czechoslovak firms had been made at a time when the sham diplomatic battle which was to serve as the justification for the actual seizure of Czechoslovak territories was still in full swing."

"These facts also clearly show that it was the economic interests of the German monopolies that provided the basis for the Munich Agreement, and that these monopolies made their preparations for the campaign of plunder long before the diplomatic negotiations had begun."

Dr. Alice Teichová (Czechoslovakia)

CARTEL POLICIES OF THE GERMAN MONOPOLIES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA PRIOR TO MUNICH

(Contribution to the discussion)

Capitalist Czechoslovakia became a field for fierce competition between various groups of international finance capital, especially between German and West European interests.

"Approximately 30 per cent of the total capital of the banks and industrial and commercial enterprises of Czechoslovakia, according to a rough estimate, were held by international finance capital in the period prior to Munich. By far the most significant position among foreign monopolies with investments in Czechoslovakia was held by West European capital. It has been estimated that British, French, Dutch and Belgian investments accounted for roughly 65 per cent of the total foreign investment in Czechoslovak banking and industry prior to Munich. Germany, with the relatively small share of about 5.5 per cent, came only sixth among the foreign investors in Czechoslovakia."

"The world economic crisis of 1929—33 upset the economic and political foundations of the Versailles system and the Little Entente. Within the growing struggle over Central and Eastern Europe between Germany, Britain, France and Italy, competition between German and Czechoslovak finance capital also increased.

"German finance capital attempted, therefore, to weaken and finally sever the mutual economic and political ties that linked Czechoslovakia to the Western Powers and to

the members of the Little Entente. These endeavours reached their culminating point under fascism."

"In the various cartel agreements concluded with Czechoslovak industrial enterprises, the German partners pursued a deliberate and officially inspired policy; they negotiated agreements which led, in the course of the thirties, to the loss to Czechoslovak foreign trade of the markets of the Succession States and to the increasing penetration of German industrial goods on to the Czechoslovak home market."

"German cartels got their most effective grip on Czechoslovakia's chemical, mining, iron and steel, engineering and electrical industries, i. e. in those branches of production where the investments of Western capital were most significant."

"Due note should be taken of this cartel policy when analyzing the economic background to the events of that period, in which the imperialists once again endeavoured to re-divide the world."

"The Munich Agreement, to be precise, was an attempt to overcome the contradictions and conflicts between Western European and German imperialism, in particular between Great Britain and Germany, on an anti-Soviet basis and at the expense of the independence of Czechoslovakia."

Prof. Jacob Presser (Holland)

THE RESPONSE TO MUNICH IN HOLLAND

(Contribution to the discussion)

"I should like to convey my greetings to the conference in the form of a brief account of the year 1938—the Munich period. At that time there were many people in my country who were overjoyed at the outcome of Munich."

"They were grateful that peace had been, or would be, preserved. These people's delight was such that they decorated their homes with banners and flags—our national flags. My friends and I were profoundly disturbed at this display of flags by a well-meaning people at a time when your country, Czechoslovakia, was undergoing such humiliation.

"One of the many Dutch thinkers—one of the greatest and best Dutch writers of modern times—Melo Kelbrach, published an article with the title 'The Betrayal of the Flags,' in which he expressed his regret that your country, Czechoslovakia, had been betrayed, and in which he warned his countrymen, the people of Holland, that the day would come when each would feel on his own skin what it means when one's country is humiliated and trampled in the dust by fascist boots, when each one would himself experience the meaning of the end of September, 1938."

And, indeed, in May 1940, the fascists invaded Holland.

"We have gathered here with the feeling that co-operation between progressive forces of all countries will be the guarantee that this humiliation will never be repeated, that imperialism and fascism will never triumph."

Dr. Vittorio Orilia (Italy)

ITALY'S PART

(Contribution to the discussion)

"Italy did not play a cardinal role in the years 1935 to 1940 . . . During that period Italian foreign policy was basically that of a country linked to Hitler Germany which had very little opportunity for independent action."

"The last serious attempt by Italy to compete with Hitler Germany in Europe—particularly in the Danube region—was, I would say, in 1934-1935, at the time of the Vienna coup which cost Dollfuss his life, that is, in the period preceding the Abyssinian war. Without doubt, this belated colonial war and Italian-German collaboration in Spain were the factors which finally and ultimately put Italy at the mercy of Germany. It may be said that from 1936 on, Italy and its leading politicians were irrevocably harnessed to German foreign policy. For this reason the policy of Hodža and Beck and other politicians in Central and Eastern Europe, who wanted to base some sort of an anti-Hitler action on the support of fascist Italy, or see her become a third force in Europe, was completely unrealistic, because the central pillar of the illusory edifice they had constructed—Italy—had neither strength nor opportunity to pursue such a policy."

Of course, this does not in any way lessen Italy's responsibility for the events preceding Munich. The Munich events retain their importance even for today.

"Munich signified the end of one epoch in Europe and the beginning of a new historical era, for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe particularly. And if there

are people in my own country and in other Western European countries who underestimate the significance of the Munich events, and who have continued—I am thinking here of the end of the second World War and the first post-war years—to underestimate the historical changes that have taken place in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, then this is certainly not a matter of chance."

To all the major problems of the post-war world we must apply "the yardstick of realism and true knowledge of the facts. This is the only approach which is capable of preventing these problems from being converted into another Munich, into a new political design completely without relation to reality, to the historical traditions and aspirations of the nations, and destined to perish in tragic circumstances."

Dr. Vladimír Soják (Czechoslovakia)

MUNICH AND THE PRESENT

(Excerpt from an address to the conference)

"The Munich Agreement affected the whole course of international relations so profoundly that the word Munich is used to designate not only the actual events of the year 1938 which culminated in Munich, but also as a term of comparison and analogy in describing numerous events, incidents, manifestations and trends in international affairs ever since Munich."

"In verifying the accuracy of such analogies we must take as a starting point the basic features, causes and consequences of Munich, 1938, which gave rise to the 'Munich' and 'the Munich policy' which have since been internationally accepted. They must then be compared with present events to determine the similarities and differences."

"In any detailed study of the causes of Munich this term can be used only with recognition for the fact that Munich was an integral part of the anti-Soviet campaign of the capitalist governments, a campaign directed against all progressive forces aimed at destroying or restricting capitalist rule."

"Then, as today, the most important international problem was the question of war and peace. Munich was allegedly intended to prevent war and preserve peace—in fact, it gave additional strength to the most aggressive forces in the world, and and thereby inevitably brought the danger of war closer. War actually broke out less than a year after Munich."

"The concept Munich has thus become evidence of the

reactionary character of the foreign policy of the capitalist governments of the time, and of their disregard for the historical realities, because it was an attempt to stop and divert the inevitable historic process in which the final victory always rests with the progressive forces."

"The facts show that history has thwarted all plans to destroy socialism, which were at the root of the Munich policy.

"But that does not mean that these plans disappeared at the end of the Second World War. On the contrary, they continued to be the core of the foreign policies of the ruling class in the capitalist countries."

They are being fostered most actively by the United States, which is now in the leadership of the capitalist world. The ruling circles of the U.S. are trying to establish an anti-Soviet bloc under their leadership. Though on a wider basis, this is basically a continuation of the Munich policy. If their policies in general are a continuation of the disastrous Munich tradition, this is particularly true of their relation to Germany. They see in German imperialism their main ally, just as they did before the war.

"As part of the plans for world conquest fostered by the American ruling circles, the basis of German imperialism is gradually being established. There is, of course, a basic difference in its position as compared with the pre-war period. Today there are two German states: The German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic.

"The German Democratic Republic, a state in which the German people are their own masters for the first time in history, has condemned the entire development of Germany that led to Munich and to the second World War. It goes without saying that they repudiate any

renewal of aggressive intentions on the part of Germany against Czechoslovakia or any other country."

Developments within the German Federal Republic have been entirely different.

"Though an open fascist dictatorship has not yet been established in the German Federal Republic, the fact remains that thanks to American help those forces that once helped to bring the nazi dictatorship to power are raising their heads again. These are the West German monopolies, the masters of heavy industry."

An analysis of the post-war policies of the other Munich powers—Great Britain and France—clearly shows that there are trends in those countries which grow out of the same roots as did Munich.

"We can observe how, once again, and this time under American guidance and with the steadily growing participation of West German militarism, the governments of the four Western Powers are pursuing policies which in their basically anti-Soviet and anti-socialist content are a continuation of the Munich policy."

"The imperialists are extending their aggressive policies against all socialist countries, even in areas outside Europe. Proof of this are the hundreds of American military bases, and the SEATO and Bagdad-type pacts. These serve their policy of direct intervention, of which the most glaring examples are Korea and Vietnam.

"Though in both these cases similarities to Munich emerge, there are also certain basic differences, for the imperialists did not succeed in carrying out their plans."

"The war-mongering attacks against communism and against the countries of the socialist bloc are part of broader ideological preparations by imperialism, intent on maintaining international tension and keeping the world on the brink of war.

"Since Munich, however, basic changes have occurred in the world, so that the new Munich policy has already suffered a number of defeats.

"The first of these is the change in the position of the Soviet Union, which is today the main guardian of peace in the world, just as it was at the time of Munich.

"Today, however, the Soviet Union plays a much greater role in the world than at time of Munich. The influence it exerts in the world is not based primarily on strength but on the example of its internal development, and the direction of its foreign policy which, just as at the time of Munich, serves the common endeavours of all peace-loving people to preserve peace in the world.

"The struggle for peace is also based on another immense change that has taken place since the war's end, the establishment of the socialist bloc."

Where does Czechoslovakia stand in this international situation? How has its position changed since 1938?

"Munich showed the Czechoslovak people that there is no place for their state in the capitalist world, where a shift in the relative strength of the Great Powers led to the destruction of Czechoslovakia's independence, and even threatened the very existence of the Czech and Slovak nations.

"The people of the Czechoslovak Republic have drawn the relevant conclusions from their experiences. After the end of the second World War they made fundamental changes in the state and, following from this, in its foreign policy. A new social order is being built in the country, and its foreign policy is integrated with that of the rest of the socialist bloc.

"The state is no longer ruled by the bourgeoisie, willing to sacrifice the interests of the people to their narrow class interests; in the sphere of foreign relations the fate of Czechoslovakia is no longer decided by the imperialists,

who proved themselves willing to sacrifice the country to anyone who fitted into their aggressive designs against the Soviet Union."

"Today people's democratic Czechoslovakia need no longer fear a new Munich Agreement."

Prof. Bernard Lavergne (France)

THE MUNICH POLICY AND THE OUTLOOK FOR THE NATIONS

(Contribution to the discussion)

"'I ask the Czech people to consider these few lines an expression of the pain I feel as a man and as a free citizen of France, and of the shame I feel at this base betrayal.' These were the concluding lines of my article 'Munich—the Democracies Defeated,' published in my own review, *L'Année Politique*, on November 15, 1938, a month and a half after the shameful capitulation.

"This was a protest, unfortunately without any practical value, which I nevertheless felt bound to make in defence of honour, on behalf of all the Frenchmen who like myself, had been filled with indignation by Munich. It is perhaps thanks to this protest that I have the great pleasure of having been invited to your capital to speak here."

"Few nations have lived through such a tragic fate as yours, and few nations have demonstrated such courage in the face of disaster. This alone entitles you to our admiration and our love."

"We Frenchmen for centuries shared with you common enemies: the House of Hapsburg, fanatic and unintelligent, against whom François I and other Kings of France struggled; the Hohenzollerns, craving for world domination; finally Hitler, their maniacal and demented successor. You hate them all. Believe me, so do we.

"Certain governments of France have committed the fatal error of breaking with the traditional French policy, which has at all times sought support from, and an

alliance with, the East, with you, the other countries of Central Europe, and with the Ottoman Empire, and primarily with great Russia. These mistakes, however, cannot last forever. It is a geographical and historical necessity for France to find the required counter-weight and strength in the Slav nations to the East to protect it against German aggression.

"As you see, the nature of things is such, and historical traditions have evolved in such a way as to give France and Czechoslovakia the same enemies and, I would say also, the same friends. This is one more reason for us Frenchmen to be your friends and to admire you.

"These few words, then, are a summary of the traditional and honourable policy of France towards you and the Eastern countries. I suppose that you now expect me to tell you why, in those unfortunate years, the governments of France—and I would stress the governments of France and not the French people—deviated from this natural and correct course that France had pursued, why they *took up* a policy which was neither honourable, *nor* intelligent, *nor* even French."

"Why did France and England break their solemn word? I maintain that there were several reasons for this."

1) Both believed that they were not sufficently prepared from a military point of view.

2) The people of France were in a state of physical weariness, exhaustion, which goes a long way towards explaining their attitude.

3) A large section of the French press had been bought and pressed into the service of the German Embassy, which was generous in its subsidies.

4) Many Frenchmen were under the influence of a pacifism which made them accept the Munich agreement —to quote Léon Blum—with 'cowardly relief.'

5) Another contributing factor was fear of the Soviet Union and of the possible defeat of the capitalist system in France.

6) Stupidity also played its role in the Munich events. And not only in the Munich events but still today.

"Why does the United States refuse to recognize Communist China? Why did France wage war for seven years in Indochina, and has now been waging four years of war in Algeria, and rejects the idea of peaceful negotiations? Why do those Frenchmen who are the advocates of a Little Europe believe that it would not be Germany that would have hegemony in it, but France? Stupidity and again stupidity."

What conclusions should be drawn from this for French policy; what lesson can we learn?

"It is as clear as the light of day that France can only pursue a truly independent policy and play her role in the international sphere if she has an agreement and relations with the countries of the East: with you, Poland and the U.S.S.R."

REPLIES BY LORD STANSGATE TO QUESTIONS PUT BY ČTK (CZECHOSLOVAK PRESS AGENCY)

Q: You visited Czechoslovakia on the occasion of the International Conference on the 20th anniversary of Munich. At the time of Munich, you took a stand against the policy to which Czechoslovakia fell victim and which left in its wake incalculable hardships for the British people and all European nations as well. What is your opinion on the fact that certain circles in the West, who have not benefited by experience, are again bent on resurrecting the Munich policy.

A: The fundamental mistake made twenty years ago was the failure to introduce the Soviet Government into a scheme of Mutual Security. Today an effort is being made to reverse this policy in the demand for a Summit Conference. But the meeting of this Conference is constantly postponed.

Q: The revival of German militarism before World War II was a substantial component of the policy of Munich. How do you appraise present policy of strengthening German militarism, as well as the fact that it is taking place in a state which openly proclaims territorial demands on its neighbours in the East and where revanchism receives official support?

A: The failure of the Disarmament Conference is made the reason for German rearmament. This rearmament greatly increases the difficulty of agreement. And in particular it may encourage the Bonn Government to support the claims, territorial and other, of the revanchists.

Q: Of what significance, in your opinion, is the fact that a German state exists today, the German Democratic Republic, which has thoroughly uproooted militarism and which is developing relations with its neighbours in the East on the basis of close, friendly, peaceful co-operation?

A: The existence of Eastern Germany has produced for the first time friendship with the Eastern neighbours. A united Germany must recognise and develop this achievement.

Q: We know that you rank among the friends of the Chinese People's Republic and that you, as President of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, supported participation in this Union by the representatives of the Chinese People's Republic. How do you appraise the international position of the Chinese People's Republic today and her significance in international developments?

A: As to China, in the resolution of the Labour Party Conference a clear demand is made for the seating of the Chinese People's Republic in the Security Council. Until this is done peace in Asia is impossible.

Q: What are, in your opinion, the prospects for peaceful co-existence and co-operation between states with different social and economic systems?

A: As to co-existence, there is no alternative save annihilation. A closer friendly acquaintance will improve the policies of both sides.

Q: What is your attitude towards the proposals for the cessation of nuclear weapon tests?

A: I am entirely in favour of the Labour Party's resolution demanding the cessation of nuclear tests. In so far as they may be necessary for the development of atomic power for peaceful purpose, the Conference of Scientists at Geneva has shown that the necessary controls can be imposed.

LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF MUNICH

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